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A LITTLE BOOK OF VERSE ABOUT CHILDREN FOR THEIR ELDERS

CHOSEN, EDITED & ARRANGED

BY

THOMAS BURKE

"And He took a little child and set him in the midst of them"

LONDON
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TO

MY MOTHER

These pleasant songs the poets bring
To Childhood and its sweet brief span,
In older ears do sweetly ring.
These pleasant songs the poets bring!
But lullabies you used to sing
To us are ever dearer than
These pleasant songs the poets bring
To Childhood and its sweet brief span!



INTRODUCTION

THE scope of this little volume is sufficiently indicated by its title as to render unnecessary more than a brief word of introduction. It is a little collection of the poetry inspired by our dearest treasures, our small people. While anthologies of poetry for these small people are to be found in scores, few attempts have been made to collect those poems whose theme is the child from the parents' view—the child in sleep, in play, in mischief, and in the thousand sweet and self-revealing phases of the eternal mystery of Childhood.

Here are gathered such poems, from the patronising note of the early writers to the note of adoration most noticeable in the child-poems of "E. Nesbit," Mr. H. H. Bashford, and Mr. Alfred Noyes; with, in conclusion, a little scrip of consolation for those in whose ears the patter of small feet is now only the music of a dream.

Much of the most pleasant verse of children and childlife belongs to the last fifty years, and from the poetry of this period I have made as wide a selection as was, in the circumstances, practicable. Certain fine and familiar poems necessarily have had to be omitted, owing to vii

INTRODUCTION

copyright difficulties, but much of the best work of our modern poets I have been enabled to include, and I offer my thanks and appreciation to the following authors and publishers for generous permission accorded for the use of their copyright work:

To Miss Laurence Alma-Tadema for "A Lullaby," "A Blessing for the Blessed," and "Little Girls."

To Mr. H. H. Bashford for "At the Gate," "Cradle Song," "Little April," and "Parliament Hill"; and to the editors of Country Life and the Spectator for conforming this permission.

To Messrs. George Bell and Sons for "Fay," by Thomas Ashe, and "Toys," by Coventry Patmore.

To Mrs. Hubert Bland (E. Nesbit), for "Mother Song," "To a Child," and "Birthday Talk for a Child."

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To Mr. Austin Dobson for "Little Blue Ribbons."

To Mr. Norman Gale for "Bartholomew."

To Mr. Edmund Gosse for "To My Daughter."

To Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer for "To Christina at Nightfall,"

To Mr. E. V. Lucas for "Ad Dorotheam."

To Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd., for the Dedication to "Alice in Wonderland," the Dedication to "Through the Looking-Glass," and the pendant verses to the latter story.

viii

INTRODUCTION

To Miss Christabel Massey for "Within a Mile" and "Our Wee White Rose," by the late Gerald Massey. These poems are taken from her father's book, "My Lyrical Life," a few remaining copies of which are still obtainable from Miss Massey at "Redcot," South Norwood Hill, Surrey.

To Mr. William Meredith for "The Orchard and the Heath," by the late George Meredith.

To Mr. Alfred Noyes for "Little Boy Blue," the Prelude, and "The Splendid Secret" from "The Forest of Wild Thyme."

To Miss Hester Isobel Radford for "The Child."

To Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, for "Little Breeches," by John Hay.

To Mr. Owen Seaman for the two poems, "To Christine."

To Mr. Joseph Thorp for "The Pilot Bark."

I have taken the liberty of including three copyright poems the authors of which I have been unable to trace. I trust that they will pardon my having used their work without permission, and accept my apologies, as well as thanks.

THOMAS BURKE

Craigton Road Eltham, Kent



CONTENTS

Introduction	PAGE Vii
Prefatory	
Little Boy Blue. Alfred Noyes	xix
The Child. Hester Isobel Radford	xx
THE SPIRIT OF CHILDHOOD	
Infant Joy. William Blake	3
Gay hope is theirs. Thomas Gray	3
The Age of Children Happiest. Surrey	4
The Retreat. Henry Vaughan	5
Childhood. Henry Vaughan	6
Piping down the Valleys. William Blake	6
On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture. William Cowper	7
Address to my Infant Daughter. William Wordsworth	II
Γο William Wordsworth	13
Ode on Intimations of Immortality. William Wordsworth	16
To an Infant. Samuel Taylor Coleridge	2 2
Childhood. Hartley Coleridge	23
	xi

Соптептѕ

	PAGE
Childhood. Charles Lamb	23
I Remember. Thomas Hood	24
A Retrospective Review. Thomas Hood	25
Little Children. Mary Howitt	28
Childhood and his Visitors. Winthrop Mackworth Praed	30
School and Schoolfellows. Winthrop Mackworth Praed	32
To a Child. Henry Wadsworth Long fellow	35
My Lost Youth. Henry Wadsworth Long fellow	40
Children. Henry Wadsworth Long fellow	43
Weariness. Henry Wadsworth Long fellow	45
Child-Songs. John Greenleaf Whittier	46
There was a Child. Walt Whitman	48
Brother and Sister. George Eliot	50
At the Gate. H. H. Bashford	51
Little Girls. Laurence Alma Tadema	52
The Old School, Thomas Burke	53
Small People in the Nursery	
Golden Slumbers. Thomas Dekker	5 7
The Little People. John Greenleaf Whittier	5 7
There he lay. E. B. Browning	58
To Charlotte Pulteney. Ambrose Phillips	59
Cradle Song. George Wither	60
Lullaby. Richard Rowlands	61
Cradle Song. William Blake	62
Cradle Song. William Blake	63

CONTENTS

Nurse's Song. William Blake	FAGE
	64
Characteristics of a Child. William Wordsworth	64
Parental Recollections. Mary Lamb	65
The New-born Infant. Mary Lamb	66
The Mother's Return Dorothy Wordsworth	67
The Cottager to her Infant. Dorothy Wordsworth	69
"Of such is the Kingdom." Hartley Coleridge	69
The Sabbath Day's Child. Hartley Coleridge	70
Lullaby of an Infant Chief. Sir Walter Scott	73
On my dear Love Isabella. Marjorie Fleming	73
In bed. Marjorie Fleming	74
Golden-tressed Adelaide. Barry Cornwall	74
Lullaby. Barry Cornwall	75
The Fairy Queen. Thomas Hood	75
To a Sleeping Child. John Wilson	77
Sketch of a Young Lady. Winthrop Mackworth Praed	77
The Castle-builder. Henry Wadsworth Long fellow	79
Wee Willie Winkie. William Miller	80
Sleeping and Watching. E. B. Browning	81
A Child Asleep. E. B. Browning	83
Sweet and Low. Alfred Tennyson	85
Philip my King. Dinah Mulock Craik	86
To a Sleeping Child. Arthur Hugh Clough	87
The Toys. Coventry Patmore	88
Creep afore ye gang. James Ballantine	89
The Unknown Tongue. Joaquin Miller	90
Lullaby. William Barnes	91
	xiii

Contents

	PAG
Baby May. William Bennett	91
Song to a Babe. Jean Ingelow	93
Fay. Thomas Ashe	93
A Lullaby. Laurence Alma Tadema	94
A Blessing for the Blessed. Laurence Alma Tadema	95
Bartholomew. Norman Gale	96
Mother Song. E. Nesbit	97
To a Child. E. Nesbit	9 7
To Christina at Nightfall. Ford Madox Hueffer	99
Cradle Song. H. H. Bashford	100
Parliament Hill. H. H. Bashford	IOI
The Pilot Bark. Joseph Thorp	101
The Dream-Child. Thomas Burke	102
SMALL PEOPLE HERE AND THERE	
The Little Ones. Anon.	107
A Little Child. S. T. Coleridge	108
To a Child of Quality, Matthew Prior	109
A Song on Miss Harriet Hanbury. Charles Williams	110
On the Birthday of a Young Lady. William Whitehead	111
The Babes in the Wood. Anon.	112
To a Child. Nathaniel Cotton	117
The Picture of Little T. C. Andrew Marvell	118
The Schoolboy. William Blake	119
Holy Thursday. William Blake	120
The Sister. William Wordsworth	121
xiv	

CONTENTS

	PAGE
We are Seven. William Wordsworth	122
To H. C. William Wordsworth	124
A Boy's Song. James Hogg	125
Rosina. W. S. Landor	126
A Parental Ode. Thomas Hood	127
To J. H. Leigh Hunt	129
The Wonderfu' Wean. William Miller	130
The Children's Hour. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	131
In School-days. John Greenleaf Whittier	133
Red Riding Hood. John Greenleaf Whittier	134
The Barefoot Boy. John Greenleaf Whittier	136
A Song for the Ragged Schools. E. B. Browning	139
My Child. E. B. Browning	144
The Romance of the Swan's Nest. E. B. Browning	145
A Portrait. E. B. Browning	148
The Cry of the Children. E. B. Browning	151
Neighbour Nelly. Robert Brough	156
God's Gifts. Adelaide Anne Proctor	157
Children's Thankfulness. John Keble	159
To a very Young Lady. Mortimer Collins	161
A Child's Smile. Dinah Mulock Craik	162
Monsieur et Mademoiselle. Dinah Mulock Craik	163
To Alice. Lewis Carroll	164
To Alice. Lewis Carroll	166
Farewell Verses. Lewis Carroll	167
Little Orphant Annie. James Whitcomb Riley	168
Little Breeches. John Hay	170
	xv

Contents

	r AG
The Orchard and the Heath. George Meredith	172
Birthday Talk for a Child. E. Nesbit	174
Little Blue Ribbons. Austin Dobson	1 74
To my Daughter. Edmund Gosse	176
Ad Dorotheam. E. V. Lucas	177
To Christine. Owen Seaman	178
To Christine. Owen Seaman	181
Little April. H. H. Bashford	183
Children of Toil. Thomas Burke	184
"Grown Tired of Play"	
A Lost Child. Anon.	187
On my Son. John Beaumont	187
Lucy. William Wordsworth	189
Lucy Gray. William Wordsworth	190
O Sleep, my Babe. Sara Coleridge	192
Threnody. Ralph Waldo Emerson	193
Resignation. Henry Wadsworth Long fellow	202
The Open Window. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	204
Vesta. John Greenleaf Whittier	205
The Changeling. James Russell Lowell	205
Within a Mile. Gerald Massey	207
Our Wee White Rose. Gerald Massey	209
Baby Bell. Thomas Bailey Aldrich	211
Hush! if you remember. Alfred Noyes	214
The Splendid Secret. Alfred Noyes	217

xvi

PREFATORY



"LITTLE BOY BLUE"

(From " The Forest of Wild Thyme")

Little Boy Blue, come blow up your horn,
Summon the day of deliverance in:
We are weary of bearing the burden of scorn
As we yearn for the home that we never shall win;
For here there is weeping and sorrow and sin,
And the poor and the weak are a spoil for the strong!
Ah! when shall the song of the ransomed begin?
The world is grown weary with waiting so long.

Little Boy Blue, you are gallant and brave,
There was never a doubt in those clear bright eyes;
Come, challenge the grim dark Gates of the Grave
As the skylark sings to those infinite skies!
This world is a dream, say the old and the wise,
And its rainbows arise o'er the false and the true;
But the mists of the morning are made of our sighs—
Ah, shatter them, scatter them, Little Boy Blue

Little Boy Blue, if the child-heart knows,
Sound but a note as a little one may;
And the thorns of the desert shall bloom with the rose,
And the Healer shall wipe all tears away.
Little Boy Blue, we are all astray,
The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn,
Ah, set the world right, as a little one may;
Little Boy Blue, come blow up your horn!
ALFRED NOVES

THE CHILD

You can gaze fearless in God's face; But we, so loud our conscience cries, Dare not look up, lest we should trace Our souls reflected in his eyes.

HESTER ISOBEL RADFORD



INFANT JOY

"I HAVE no name;
I am but two days old."
What shall I call thee?
"I happy am,
Joy is my name,"
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy, but two days old.
Sweet joy I call thee;
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while;
Sweet joy befall thee!
WILLIAM BLAKE

GAY hope is theirs by fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possest;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast;
Theirs buxom health, of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever new,
And lively cheer, of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light
That fly th' approach of morn.
THOMAS GRAY

THE AGE OF CHILDREN HAPPIEST

LAID in my quiet bed in study as I were,
I saw within my troubled head a heap of thoughts

The appear,

And every thought did show so lively in mine eyes, That now I sighed, and then I smiled, as cause of thoughts

did rise.

I saw the little boy in thought, how oft that he Did wish of God, to 'scape the rod, a tall young man to be; The young man eke that feels his bones with pain opprest, How he would be a rich old man, to live and be at rest! The rich old man that sees his end draw on so sore, How would he be a boy again to live so much the more. Whereat full oft I smiled, to see how all those three, From boy to man, from man to boy, would chop and change

SURREY

THE RETREAT

TAPPY those early days, when I Shined in my angel-infancy! Before I understood this place Appointed for my second race, Or taught my soul to fancy aught But a white, celestial thought; When yet I had not walked above A mile or two, from my first love, And looking back—at that short space— Could see a glimpse of His bright face; When on some gilded cloud or flower, My gazing soul would dwell an hour, And in those weaker glories spy Some shadows of eternity; Before I taught my tongue to wound My conscience with a sinful sound, Or had the black art to dispense A several sin to every sense, But felt through all this fleshy dress Bright shoots of everlastingness.

O how I long to travel back
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence the enlightened spirit sees
That shady City of palm trees!
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

HENRY VAUGHAN

CHILDHOOD

CANNOT reach it; and my striving eye Dazzles at it, as at eternity. Were now that chronicle alive, Those white designs which children drive. And the thoughts of each harmless hour, With them content too, in my power, Quickly would I make my path even And by mere playing go to heaven. Dear, harmless age! the short, swift span Where weeping virtue parts with man; Where love without lust dwells, and bends What way we please without self-ends. An age of mysteries! which he Must live twice that would God's face see: Which angels guard and with it play; Angels which foul men drive away. How do I study now, and scan Thee more than e'er I study man, And only see through a long night Thy edges and thy bordering light! O for thy centre and mid-day! For sure that is the narrow way. HENRY VAUGHAN

PIPING DOWN THE VALLEYS WILD

PIPING down the valleys wild, Piping songs of pleasant glee, On a cloud I saw a child, And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again;"
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe; Sing thy songs of happy cheer!' So I sang the same again, While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write In a book that all may read." So he vanished from my sight; And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.
WILLIAM BLAKE

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK

H that those lips had language! Life has passed With me but roughly since I heard thee last. Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see, The same that oft in childhood solaced me; Voice only fails, else how distinct they say, "Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!" The meek intelligence of those dear eyes (Blest be the Art that can immortalise,—The Art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected, here!
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own:
And while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,—
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead, Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed? Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son, Wretch even then, life's journey just begun? Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss; Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss-Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—"Yes." I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day, I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away, And, turning from my nursery window, drew A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu! But was it such ?—It was.—Where thou art gone Adieux and farewells are a sound unknown; May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore, The parting word shall pass my lips no more! Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern, Oft gave me promise of thy quick return. What ardently I wished, I long believed, And, disappointed still, was still deceived; By expectation every day beguiled, Dupe of to-morrow even from a child. Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went, Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent, I learned at last submission to my lot, But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,

Children not thine have trod my nursery floor; And where the gardener, Robin, day by day, Drew me to school along the public way, Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped, 'Tis now become a history little known, That once we called the pastoral house our own. Short-lived possession! but the record fair, That memory keeps of all thy kindness there, Still outlives many a storm that has effaced A thousand other themes less deeply traced. Thy nightly visits to my chamber made, That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid; Thy morning bounties ere I left my home, The biscuit, or confectionary plum; The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed: All this, and more endearing still than all, Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall, Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks, That humour interposed too often makes: And all this legible in Memory's page, And still to be so to my latest age, Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay Such honours to thee as my numbers may; Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere, Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here. Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers, The violet, the pink, and jessamine, I pricked them into paper with a pin (And thou wast happier than myself the while, Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile), Could those few pleasant days again appear, Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here? I would not trust my heart—the dear delight

Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might— But no—what here we call our life is such, So little to be loved and thou so much, That I should ill requite thee, to constrain Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast (The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed) Shoots into port at some well-havened isle, Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile, There sits quiescent on the floods that show Her beauteous form reflected clear below. While airs impregnated with incense play Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;-So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore, "Where tempests never beat nor billows roar;" And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide Of life, long since has anchored by thy side. But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest, Always from port withheld, always distressed— Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-tossed, Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost, And day by day some current's thwarting force Sets me more distant from a prosperous course. Yet oh, the thought that thou art safe, and he! That thought is joy, arrive what may to me. My boast is not that I deduced my birth From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth: But higher far my proud pretensions rise-The son of parents passed into the skies. And now, Farewell.—Time unrevoked has run His wonted course, yet what I wished is done. By Contemplation's help, not sought in vain, I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again; To have renewed the joys that once were mine. Without the sin of violating thine: And while the wings of Fancy still are free,

And I can view this mimic show of thee, Time has but half succeeded in his theft-Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left. WILLIAM COWPER

ADDRESS TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER ON BEING REMINDED THAT SHE WAS A MONTH OLD ON THAT DAY

TAST thou then survived, Mild offspring of infirm humanity. Meek infant! among all forlornest things The most forlorn, one life of that bright star, The second glory of the heavens?—Thou hast: Already hast survived that great decay; That transformation through the wide earth felt, And by all nations. In that Being's sight From whom the race of human kind proceed. A thousand years are but as yesterday; And one day's narrow circuit is to Him Not less capacious than a thousand years. But what is time? What outward glory?

Neither

A measure is of Thee, whose claims extend Through "heaven's eternal year."—Yet hail to thee, Frail, feeble monthling !-by that name, methinks, Thy scanty breathing-time is portioned out Not idly.—Hadst thou been of Indian birth, Couched on a casual bed of moss and leaves, And rudely canopied by leafy boughs, Or to the churlish elements exposed On the blank plains,—the coldness of the night, Or the night's darkness, or its cheerful face Of beauty, by the changing moon adorned, Would, with imperious admonition, then

Have scored thine age, and punctually timed Thine infant history, on the minds of those Who might have wandered with thee.—

Mother's love,

Nor less than mother's love in other breasts, Will, among us warm clad and warmly housed, Do for thee what the finger of the heavens Doth all too often harshly execute For thy unblest coevals, amid wilds Where fancy hath small liberty to grace The affections, to exalt them or refine; And the maternal sympathy itself, Though strong, is, in the main, a joyless tie Of naked instinct, wound about the heart. Happier, far happier is thy lot and ours! Even now—To solemnise thy helpless state, And to enliven in the mind's regard Thy passive beauty—parallels have risen, Resemblances, or contrasts, that connect, Within the region of a father's thoughts, Thee and thy mate and sister of the sky. And first:—thy sinless progress, through a world By sorrow darkened and by care disturbed, Apt likeness bears to hers, through gathered clouds, Moving untouched in silver purity, And cheering oft-times their reluctant gloom. Fair are ye both, and both are free from stain: But thou, how leisurely thou fill'st thy horn With brightness !—leaving her to post along, And range about-disquieted in change, And still impatient of the shape she wears. Once up, once down the hill, one journey, babe, That will suffice thee; and it seems that now Thou hast fore-knowledge that such task is thine: Thou travell'st so contentedly, and sleep'st In such a heedless peace. Alas! full soon

Hath this conception, grateful to behold, Changed countenance, like an object sullied o'er By breathing mist! and thine appears to be A mournful labour, while to her is given Hope—and a renovation without end. That smile forbids the thought;—for on thy race Smiles are beginning, like the beams of dawn, To shoot and circulate; -smiles have there been seen, -Tranquil assurances that Heaven supports The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers Thy loneliness;—or shall those smiles be called Feelers of love,—put forth as if to explore This untried world, and to prepare thy way Through a strait passage intricate and dim? Such are they,—and the same are tokens, signs, Which, when the appointed season hath arrived, Joy, as her holiest language, shall adopt; And reason's godlike power be proud to own. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

TO ----, UPON THE BIRTH OF HER FIRST-BORN CHILD

IKE a shipwreck'd Sailor tost
By rough waves on a perilous coast,
Lies the Babe, in helplessness
And in tenderest nakedness,
Flung by labouring nature forth
Upon the mercies of the earth.
Can its eyes beseech? no more
Than the hands are free to implore:
Voice but serves for one brief cry,
Plaint was it? or prophecy

Of sorrow that will surely come? Omen of man's grievous doom!

But, O Mother! by the close Duly granted to thy throes; By the silent thanks now tending Incense-like to Heaven, descending Now to mingle and to move With the gush of earthly love, As a debt to that frail Creature, Instrument of struggling Nature For the blissful calm, the peace Known but to this one release; Can the pitying spirit doubt That from human-kind springs out From the penalty a sense Of more than mortal recompence?

As a floating summer cloud, Though of gorgeous drapery proud, To the sun-burnt traveller, Or the stooping labourer, Ofttimes makes its bounty known By its shadow round him thrown; So, by chequerings of sad cheer, Heavenly guardians, brooding near, Of their presence tell—too bright Haply for corporeal sight! Ministers of grace divine Feelingly their brows incline O'er this seeming Castaway Breathing, in the light of day, Something like the faintest breath That has power to baffle death— Beautiful, while very weakness Captivates like passive meekness!

And, sweet Mother! under warrant Of the universal Parent,
Who repays in season due
Them who have, like thee, been true
To the filial chain let down
From his everlasting throne,
Angels hovering round thy couch
With their softest whispers vouch,
That, whatever griefs may fret,
Cares entangle, sins beset
This thy first-born, and with tears
Stain her cheek in future years,
Heavenly succour, not denied
To the Babe, whate'er betide,
Will to the Woman be supplied!

Mother! blest be thy calm ease; Blest the starry promises, And the firmament benign Hallowed be it, where they shine! Yes, for them whose souls have scope Ample for a winged hope, And can earthward bend an ear For needful listening, pledge is here, That, if thy new-born Charge shall tread In thy footsteps, and be led By that other Guide, whose light Of manly virtues, mildly bright, Gave him first the wished-for part In thy gentle virgin heart, Then, amid the storms of life Presignified by that dread strife Whence we have escaped together, She may look for serene weather; In all trials sure to find Comfort for a faithful mind;

Kindlier issues, holier rest,
Than even now await her prest,
Conscious Nursling, to thy breast!
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

"The child is father of the man; And I could wish my days to be Bound each to each by natural piety."

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem

Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore,—

Turn whereso'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song, And while the young lambs bound As to the tabor's sound,

To me alone there came a thought of grief: A timely utterance gave that thought relief,

And I again am strong:

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep, No more shall grief of mine the season wrong; I hear the echoes through the mountains throng, The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,

And all the earth is gay;

Land and sea

Give themselves up to jollity, And with the heart of May

Doth every beast keep holiday;—

Thou child of joy,

Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy shepherd boy!

Ye blessed creatures, I have heard the call

Ye to each other make; I see

The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee; My heart is at your festival,

My head hath its coronal,

The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.

O evil day! if I were sullen

While the earth itself is adorning,

The sweet May morning,

And the children are pulling,

On every side,

In a thousand valleys far and wide,

Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,

And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm :—

I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!

But there's a tree, of many, one,

A single field which I have looked upon,

Both of them speak of something that is gone:

The pansy at my feet Doth the same tale repeat:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam? Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting: The soul that rises with us, our life's star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,

And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home: Heaven lies about us in our infancy! Shades of the prison-house begin to close Upon the growing boy,

But he beholds the light, and whence it flows, He sees it in his joy;

The youth, who daily farther from the east Must travel, still is nature's priest, And by the vision splendid Is on his way attended:

At length the man perceives it die away, And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own; Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind, And, even with something of a mother's mind,

And no unworthy aim,

The homely nurse doth all she can To make her foster-child, her inmate man,

Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.
Behold the child among his new-born blisses,
A six-years' darling of a pigmy size!
See where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!

See, at his feet, some little plan or chart, Some fragment from his dream of human life, Shaped by himself with newly learned art:

A wedding or a festival,
A mourning of a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue

To dialogues of business, love, or strife;

But it will not be long Ere this be thrown aside, And with new joy and pride

The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the persons, down to palsied age,
That life brings with her in her equipage;

As if his whole vocation Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity,
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind—

Mighty prophet! seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,

Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife? Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight, And custom lie upon thee with a weight, Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed Perpetual benediction: not indeed For that which is most worthy to be blest: Delight and liberty, the simple creed Of childhood, whether busy or at rest, With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:

Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,

High instincts before which our mortal nature Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised: But for those first affections,

Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;

Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make Our noisy years seem moments in the being Of the eternal silence: truths that wake

To perish never;

Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour, Nor man nor boy,

Nor all that is at enmity with joy,

Can utterly abolish or destroy!

Hence, in a season of calm weather, Though inland far we be,

Our souls have sight of that immortal sea Which brought us hither,

Can in a moment travel thither, And see the children sport upon the shore, And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then sing ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!

And let the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound!

We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright Be now for ever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

We will grieve not, rather find Strength in what remains behind; In the primal sympathy Which having been must ever be, In the soothing thoughts that spring Out of human suffering,

In the faith that looks through death, In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves, Think not of any severing of our loves! Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might: I only have relinquished one delight To live beneath your more habitual sway. I love the brooks which down their channels fret, Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;

The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet;

The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

TO AN INFANT

AH! cease thy tears and sobs, my little Life!
I did but snatch away the unclasped knife: Some safer toy will soon arrest thine eye, And to quick laughter change this peevish cry! Poor stumbler on the rocky coast of woe, Tutored by pain each source of pain to know! Alike the foodful fruit and scorching fire Awake thy eager grasp and young desire? Alike the Good, the Ill offend thy sight, And rouse the stormy sense of shrill affright! Untaught, yet wise, 'mid all thy brief alarms Thou closely clingest to thy Mother's arms, Nestling thy little face in that fond breast Whose anxious heavings lull thee to thy rest! Man's breathing Miniature! thou mak'st me sigh-A Babe art thou-and such a thing am I! To anger rapid and as soon appeased, For trifles mourning and by trifles pleased, Break Friendship's mirror with a tetchy blow, Yet snatch what coals of fire on Pleasure's altar glow! 22

O thou that rearest with celestial aim,
The future Seraph in my mortal frame,
Thrice holy Faith! whatever thorns I meet,
As on I totter with unpractised feet,
Still let me stretch my arms and cling to thee,
Meek nurse of souls through their long infancy!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

CHILDHOOD

OH what a wilderness were this sad world
If man were always man, and never child;
If Nature gave no time, so sweetly wild,
When every thought is deftly crisped and curled,
Like fragrant hyacinth with dew impearled,
And every feeling in itself confiding,
Yet never single, but continuous, gliding
With wavy motion as, on wings unfurled,
A seraph clips Empyreal! Such man was
Ere sin had made him know himself too well,
No child was born ere that primeval loss,
What might have been no living soul can tell:
But Heaven is kind, and therefore all possess
Once in their life fair Eden's simpleness.
HARTLEY COLERIDGE

CHILDH00D

In my poor mind it is most sweet to muse
Upon the days gone by; to act in thought
Past seasons o'er, and be again a child;
To sit in fancy on the turf-clad slope
Down which the child would roll; to pluck gay flowers,

Make posies in the sun, which the child's hand (Childhood offended soon, soon reconciled)
Would throw away, and straight take up again,
Then fling them to the winds, and o'er the lawn
Bound with so playful and so light a foot,
That the pressed daisy scarce declined her head.
CHARLES LAMB

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

REMEMBER, I remember
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day,
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember
The roses, red and white,
The violets, and the lily-cups,
Those flowers made of light!
The lilac where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday—
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember
Where I used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,

And summer pools could hardly cool The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember
The fir-trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heav'n
Than when I was a boy.

THOMAS HOOD

A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW

OH, when I was a tiny boy,
My days and nights were full of joy,
My mates were blithe and kind!—
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
To cast a look behind!

A hoop was an eternal round
Of pleasure. In those days I found
A top a joyous thing;—
But now those past delights I drop,
My head, alas! is all my top,
And careful thoughts the string!

My marbles—once my bag was stored,—
Now I must play with Elgin's lord,
With Theseus for a taw!
My playful horse has slipt his string,
Forgotten all his capering,
And harness'd to the law!

My kite—how fast and far it flew!
Whilst I, a sort of Franklin, drew
My pleasure from the sky!
'Twas paper'd o'er with studious themes,
The tasks I wrote—my present dreams
Will never soar so high!

My joys are wingless all and dead;
My dumps are made of more than lead;
My flights soon find a fall;
My fears prevail, my fancies droop,
Joy never cometh with a hoop,
And seldom with a call!

My football's laid upon the shelf;
I am a shuttlecock myself
The world knocks to and fro;
My archery is all unlearned,
And grief against myself has turn'd
My arrows and my bow!

No more in noontide sun I bask;
My authorship's an endless task,
My head's ne'er out of school:
My heart is pain'd with scorn and slight,
I have too many foes to fight,
And friends grown strangely cool!

The very chum that shared my cake
Holds out so cold a hand to shake,
It makes me shrink and sigh:—
On this I will not dwell and hang—
The changeling would not feel a pang,
Thought these should meet his eye!

No skies so blue or so serene
As then;—no leaves looked half so green
As clothed the playground tree!
All things I loved are altered so,
Nor does it ease my heart to know
That change resides in me!

Oh for the garb that mark'd the boy,
The trousers made of corduroy,
Well ink'd with black and red;
The crownless hat, ne'er deem'd an ill—
It only let the sunshine still
Repose upon my head!

Oh for the riband round the neck!
The careless dogs'-ears apt to check
My book and collar both!
How can this formal man be styled
Merely an Alexandrine child,
A boy of larger growth?

Oh for that small, small beer anew!
And (heaven's own type) that mild sky-blue
That wash'd my sweet meals down;
The master even!—and that small Turk
That fagg'd me!—worse is now my work—
A fag for all the town!

Oh for the lessons learn'd by heart!
Ay, though the very birch's smart
Should mark these hours again;
I'd "kiss the rod," and be resign'd
Beneath the stroke, and even find
Some sugar in the cane!

The Arabian Nights rehearsed in bed!
The Fairy Tales in school-time read,
By stealth, 'twixt verb and noun!
The angel form that always walk'd
In all my dreams, and look'd, and talk'd
Exactly like Miss Brown.

The omne bene—Christmas come!
The prize of merit, won for home—Merit had prizes then!
But now I write for days and days,
For fame—a deal of empty praise,
Without the silver pen!

Then "home, sweet home!" the crowded coach—
The joyous shout—the loud approach—
The winding horns like rams'!
The meeting sweet that made me thrill,
The sweetmeats, almost sweeter still,
No "satis" to the "jams"!—

When that I was a tiny boy
My days and nights were full of joy,
My mates were blithe and kind!
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
To cast a look behind!

THOMAS HOOD

LITTLE CHILDREN

S PORTING through the forest wide; Playing by the waterside; Wandering o'er the heathy fells, Down within the woodland dells;

All among the mountains wild Dwelleth many a little child! In the baron's hall of pride, By the poor man's dull fireside; 'Mid the mighty, 'mid the mean, Little children may be seen, Like the flowers that spring up fair, Bright and countless, everywhere.

In the far isles of the main;
In the desert's lone domain;
In the savage mountain glen,
'Mong the tribes of swarthy men;
Wheresoe'er a foot hath gone,
Wheresoe'er the sun hath shone
On a league of peopled ground,
Little children may be found!
Blessings on them! they in me
Move a kindly sympathy
With their wishes, hopes and fears;
With their laughter and their tears;
With their wonder so intense,
And their small experience!

Little children, not alone
On the wide earth are ye known.
'Mid its labours and its cares,
'Mid its sufferings and its snares;
Free from sorrow, free from strife,
In the world of love and life,
Where no sinful thing has trod,
In the presence of your God,
Spotless, blameless, glorified,
Little children, ye abide!

MARY HOWITT

CHILDHOOD AND HIS VISITORS

ONCE on a time, when Sunny May
Was kissing up the April showers,
I saw fair Childhood hard at play
Upon a bank of blushing flowers:
Happy—he knew not whence or how,—
And smiling,—who could choose but love him?
For not more glad than Childhood's brow,
Was the blue heaven that beam'd above him.

Old Time, in most appalling wrath,
That valley's green repose invaded;
The brooks grew dry upon his path,
The birds were mute, the lilies faded.
But Time so swiftly wing'd his flight,
In haste a Grecian tomb to batter,
That Childhood watch'd his paper kite,
And knew just nothing of the matter.

With curling lip and glancing eye
Guilt gazed upon the scene a minute;
But Childhood's glance of purity
Had such a holy spell within it,
That the dark demon to the air
Spread forth again his baffled pinion,
And hid his envy and despair,
Self-tortured, in his own dominion,

Then stepp'd a gloomy phantom up,
Pale, cypress-crown'd, Night's awful daughter,
And proferr'd him a fearful cup
Full to the brim of bitter water!

Poor Childhood bade her tell her name; And when the beldame mutter'd—"Sorrow," He said,—"Don't interrupt my game; I'll taste it, if I must, to-morrow."

The Muse of Pindus thither came,
And woo'd him with the softest numbers
That ever scatter'd wealth and fame
Upon a youthful poet's slumbers;
Though sweet the music of the lay,
To Childhood it was all a riddle,
And "Oh," he cried, "do send away
That noisy woman with the fiddle."

Then Wisdom stole his bat and ball,
And taught him, with most sage endeavour,
Why bubbles rise and acorns fall,
And why no toy may last for ever.
She talk'd of all the wondrous laws
Which Nature's open book discloses,
And Childhood, ere she made a pause,
Was fast asleep among the roses.

Sleep on, sleep on! oh! Manhood's dreams
Are all of earthly pain or pleasure,
Of Glory's toils, Ambition's schemes,
Of cherish'd love, or hoarded treasure:
But to the couch where Childhood lies
A more delicious trance is given,
Lit up by rays from seraph eyes,
And glimpses of remember'd Heaven!
WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED

SCHOOL AND SCHOOLFELLOWS

TWELVE years ago I made a mock
Of filthy trades and traffics,
I wonder'd what they meant by stock;
I wrote delightful sapphics:
I knew the streets of Rome and Troy,
I supp'd with Fates and Furies,—
Twelve years ago I was a boy,
A happy boy, at Drury's.

Twelve years ago!—how many a thought
Of faded pains and pleasures
Those whisper'd syllables have brought
From memory's hoarded treasures!
The fields, the farms, the bats, the books,
The glories and disgraces,
The voices of dear friends, the looks
Of old familar faces!

Kind Mater smiles again to me,
As bright as when we parted;
I seem again the frank, the free
Stout-limb'd, and simple-hearted!
Pursuing every idle dream,
And shunning every warning;
With no hard work but Bovney stream,
No chill except Long Morning:

Now stopping Harry Vernon's ball
That rattled like a rocket;
Now hearing Wentworth's "Fourteen all!"
And striking for the pocket;

Now feasting on a cheese and flitch,— Now drinking from the pewter; Now leaping over Chalvey ditch, Now laughing at my tutor.

Where are my friends? I am alone;
No playmate shares my beaker;
Some lie beneath the churchyard stone,
And some—before the Speaker;
And some compose a tragedy,
And some compose a rondo;
And some draw sword for liberty,
And some draw pleas for John Doe.

Tom Mill was used to blacken eyes
Without the fear of sessions;
Charles Medlar loathed false quantities,
As much as false professions,
Now Mill keeps order in the land,
A magistrate pedantic;
And Medlar's feet repose unscann'd
Beneath the wide Atlantic.

Wild Nick, who se oaths made such a din,
Does Dr. Martext's duty;
And Mullion, with that monstrous chin,
Is married to a Beauty;
And Darrel studies, week by week,
His Mant, and not his Manton;
And Ball, who was but poor at Greek,
Is very rich at Canton.

And I am eight-and-twenty now;—
The world's cold chains have bound me;
And darker shades are on my brow,
And sadder scenes around me:

In Parliament I fill my seat,
With many other noodles;
And lay my head in Jermyn Street,
And sip my hock at Boodle's.

But often, when the cares of life
Have set my temples aching,
When visions haunt me of a wife,
When duns await my waking,
When Lady Jane is in a pet,
Or Hoby in a hurry,
When Captain Hazard wins a bet.
Or Beaulieu spoils a curry,—

For hours and hours I think and talk
Of each remember'd hobby;
I long to lounge in Poet's Walk,
To shiver in the Lobby;
I wish that I could run away
From House, and Court, and Levée,
Where bearded men appear to-day
Just Eton boys grown heavy,—

That I could bask in childhood's sun
And dance o'er childhood's roses,
And find huge wealth in one pound one,
Vast wit in broken noses,
And play Sir Giles at Datchet Lane,
And call the milkmaids Houris,—
That I could be a boy again,—
A happy boy,—at Drury's.

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED

TO A CHILD

DEAR child! how radiant on thy mother's knee, With merry-making eyes and jocund smiles, Thou gazest at the painted tiles, Whose figures grace, With many a grotesque form and face, The ancient chimney of thy nursery! The lady with the gay macaw, The dancing girl, the grave bashaw With bearded lip and chin; And, leaning idly o'er his gate, Beneath the imperial fan of state, The Chinese mandarin.

With what a look or proud command Thou shakest in thy little hand The coral rattle with its silver bells, Making a merry tune! Thousands of years in Indian seas That coral grew, by slow degrees, Until some deadly and wild monsoon Dashed it on Coromandel's sand!

Those silver bells
Reposed of yore,
As shapeless ore,
Far down in the deep-sunken wells
Of darksome mines,
In some obscure and sunless place
Beneath huge Chimborazo's base,
Or Potosi's o'erhanging pines!

And thus for thee, O little child, Through many a danger and escape, The tall ships passed the stormy cape;

For thee in foreign lands remote, Beneath a burning tropic clime, The Indian peasant, chasing the wild goat, Himself as swift and wild, In falling clutched the frail arbute, The fibres of whose shallow root, Uplifted from the soil, betrayed The silver veins beneath it laid, The buried treasures of the miser Time.

But lo! thy door is left ajar! Thou hearest footsteps from afar! And, at the sound Thou turnest round With quick and questioning eyes, Like one who, in a foreign land, Beholds on every hand Some source of wonder and surprise! And, restlessly, impatiently, Thou strivest, strugglest, to be free. The four walls of thy nursery Are now like prison walls to thee. No more thy mother's smiles, No more the painted tiles, Delight thee, nor the playthings on the floor. That won thy little beating heart before; Thou strugglest for the open door.

Through these once solitary halls Thy pattering footstep falls. The sound of thy merry voice Makes the old walls Jubilant, and they rejoice With the joy of thy young heart, O'er the light of whose gladness No shadows of sadness 36

From the sombre background of memory start. Once, ah once, within these walls, One whom memory oft recalls, The Father of his Country, dwelt. And yonder meadows broad and damp The fires of the besieging camp Encircled with a burning belt. Up and down these echoing stairs. Heavy with the weight of cares, Sounding his majestic tread; Yes, within this very room Sat he in those hours of gloom, Weary both in heart and head.

But what are these grave thoughts to thee? Out, out! into the open air! Thy only dream is liberty, Thou carest little how or where. I see thee eager at thy play, Now shouting to the apples on the tree, With cheeks as round and red as they; And now among the yellow stalks, Among the flowering shrubs and plants, As restless as the bee. Along the garden walks The tracks of thy small carriage-wheels I trace; And see at every turn how they efface Whole villages of sand-roofed tents, That rise like golden domes Above the cavernous and secret homes Of wandering and nomadic tribes of ants. Ah, cruel little Tamerlane, Who, with thy dreadful reign, Dost persecute and overwhelm These hapless Troglodytes of thy realm!

What! tired already! with those suppliant looks, And voice more beautiful than a poet's books, Or murmuring sound of water as it flows, Thou comest back to parley with repose! This rustic seat in the old apple-tree, With its o'erhanging golden canopy Of leaves illuminate with autumnal hues, And shining with the argent light of dews, Shall for a season be our place of rest. Beneath us, like an oriole's pendent nest, From which the laughing birds have taken wing, By thee abandoned, hangs thy vacant swing. Dream-like the waters of the river gleam; A sailless vessel drops adown the stream, And like it, to a sea as wide and deep, Thou driftest gently down the tides of sleep.

O child! O new-born denizen Of life's great city! on thy head The glory of the morn is shed, Like a celestial benison! Here at the portal thou dost stand, And with thy little hand Thou openest the mysterious gate Into the future's undiscovered land. I see its valves expand, As at the touch of Fate! Into those realms of love and hate, Into that darkness blank and drear, By some prophetic feeling taught, I launch the bold, adventurous thought, Freighted with hope and fear; As upon subterranean streams, In caverns unexplained and dark, Men sometimes launch a fragile bark, Laden with flickering fire, 38

And watch its swift-receding beams, Until at length they disappear, And in the distant dark expire.

By what astrology of fear or hope
Dare I to cast thy horoscope!
Like the new moon thy life appears;
A little strip of silver light,
And widening outward into night
The shadowy disk of future years;
And yet upon its outer rim,
A luminous circle, faint and dim,
And scarcely visible to us here,
Rounds and completes the perfect sphere;
A prophecy and intimation,
A pale and feeble adumbration,
Of the great world of light that lies
Behind all human destinies.

Ah! if thy fate, with anguish fraught. Should be to wet the dusty soil With the hot tears and sweat of toil,—To struggle with imperious thought, Until the overburdened brain, Weary with labour, faint with pain, Like a jarred pendulum, retain Only its motion, not its power,—Remember, in that perilous hour, When most afflicted and oppressed, From labour there shall come forth rest.

And if a more auspicious fate On thy advancing steps await, Still let it ever be thy pride To linger by the labourer's side;

With words of sympathy or song To cheer the dreary march along Of the great army of the poor, O'er desert sand, o'er dangerous moor Nor to thyself the task shall be Without reward; for thou shalt learn The wisdom early to discern True beauty in utility: As great Pythagoras of yore, Standing beside the blacksmith's door, And hearing the hammers, as they smote The anvils with a different note, Stole from the varying tones that hung Vibrant on every iron tongue, The secret of the sounding wire, And formed the seven-chorded lyre.

Enough! I will not play the Seer; I will no longer strive to ope
The mystic volume, where appear
The herald Hope, forerunning Fear,
And Fear, the pursuivant of Hope.
Thy destiny remains untold:
For, like Acestes' shaft of old,
The swift thought kindles as it flies,
And burns to ashes in the skies.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

MY LOST YOUTH

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town That is seated by the sea; Often in thought go up and down The pleasant streets of that dear old town, 40

And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.
And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore, And the fort upon the hill;

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay,
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song

And the sound of that mournful song Goes through me with a thrill: "A boy's will is the wind's will,"

And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with the sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighbourhoods.

And the verse of that old sweet song,

It flutters and murmurs still: "A boy's will is the wind's will,

And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the schoolboy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;
There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.

And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

CHILDR EN

COME to me, O ye children!
For I hear you at your play,
And the questions that perplexed me
Have vanished quite away

Ye open the eastern windows, That look towards the sun, Where thoughts are singing swallows, And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine, In your thoughts the brooklet's flow, But in mine is the wind of Autumn, And the first fall of the snow.

Ah! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,
With light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood,—

That to the world are children; Through them it feels the glow Of a brighter and sunnier climate Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings, And the wisdom of our books, When compared with your caresses, And the gladness of your looks.

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

WEARINESS

O LITTLE feet! that such long years
Must wander on through hopes and fears,
Must ache and bleed beneath your load;
I, nearer to the wayside inn
Where toil shall cease and rest begin,
Am weary, thinking of your load!

O little hands! that, weak or strong, Have still to serve or rule so long Have still so long to give or ask; I, who so much with book and pen Have toiled among my fellow-men, Am weary, thinking of your task.

O little hearts! that throb and beat
With such impatient, feverish heat,
Such limitless and strong desires;
Mine that so long has glowed and burned
With passions into ashes turned,
Now covers and conceals its fires.

O little souls! as pure and white
And crystalline as rays of light
Direct from heaven, their source divine;
Refracted through the mist of years,
How red my setting sun appears,
How lurid looks this soul of mine!
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

CHILD-SONGS

STILL linger in our noon of time And our Saxon tongue The echoes of the home-born hymns The Aryan mothers sung.

And childhood had its litanies
In every age and clime;
The earliest cradles of the race
Were rocked to poet's rhyme.

Nor sky, nor wave, nor tree, nor flower, Nor green earth's virgin sod, So moved the singer's heart of old As these small ones of God.

The mystery of unfolding life
Was more than dawning morn,
Than opening flower or crescent moon—
The human soul new-born!

And still to childhood's sweet appeal The heart of genius turns, And more than all the sages teach From lisping voices learns,—

The voices loved of him who sang, Where Tweed and Teviot glide, That sound to-day on all the winds That blow from Rydal side,—

Heard in the Teuton's household songs, And folk-lore of the Finn, Where'er to holy Christmas hearths The Christ-child enters in!

Before life's sweetest mystery still
The heart in reverence kneels;
The wonder of the primal birth
The latest mother feels.

We need love's tender lessons taught As only weakness can; God hath his small interpreters; The child must teach the man.

We wander wide through evil years, Our eyes of faith grow dim; But he is freshest from his hands And nearest unto Him!

And haply, pleading long with Him For sin-sick hearts and cold, The angels of our childhood still The Father's face behold.

Of such the kingdom!—Teach thou us, O Master most divine, To feel the deep significance Of these wise words of thine!

The haughty eye shall seek in vain What innocence beholds;
No cunning finds the keys of heaven,
No strength its gate unfolds.

Alone to guilelessness and love
That gate shall open fall;
The mind of pride is nothingness,
The childlike heart is all!
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH

THERE was a child went forth every day;
And the first object he looked upon, that object
he became;

And that object became part of him for the day, or a certain part of the day, or for many years, or

stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child.

And grass, and white and red "morning-glories," and white and red clover, and the song of the phoebe-bird,

And the Third-month lambs, and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's foal, and the cow's calf,

And the noisy brood of the barn-yard, or by the mire of the pond-side,

And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there—and the beautiful curious liquid.

And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads—all became part of him.

The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and Fifth-month became part of him;

Winter-grain sprouts, and those of the light-yellow corn,

and the esculent roots of the garden,

And the apple-trees covered with blossoms, and the fruit afterward, and wood-berries, and the commonest weeds by the road;

And the old drunkard staggering home from the outhouse of the tavern, whence he had lately risen,

And the schoolmistress that passed on her way to the school, And the friendly boys that passed—and the quarrelsome boys,

And the tidy and fresh-cheeked girls—and the bare-foot negro boy and girl,

negro boy and giri,

And the changes of city and country, wherever he went.

THE SPIRIT OF CHILDHOOD

His own parents,

He that had fathered him, and she that had conceived him in her womb, and birthed him,

They gave this child more of themselves than that;

They gave him afterward every day—they became part of him.

The mother at home, quietly placing the dishes on the

supper-table;

The mother with mild words—clean her cap and gown, a wholesome odour falling off her person and clothes as she walks by;

The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, angered,

unjust;

The blow, the quick long word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure,

The family usages, the language, the company, the fur-

niture—the yearning and swelling heart,

Affection that will not be gainsaid—the sense of what is real—the thought if, after all, it should prove unreal,

The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time the curious whether and how,

Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks?

Men and women crowding fast in the streets—if they are not flashes and specks, what are they?

The streets themselves, and the façades of houses, and goods in the windows,

Vehicles, teams, the heavy-planked wharves—the huge crossing at the ferries,

The village on the highland, seen from afar at sunset the river between,

Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on roofs and gables of white and brown, three miles off,

The schooner near by, sleepily dropping down the tide—the little boat slack-towed astern,

The hurrying tumbling waves quick-broken crests

slapping,

The strata of coloured clouds, the long bar of marcontint, away solitary by itself—the spread of purity it lies motionless in,

The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of

salt-marsh and shore-mud;

These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and will always go forth every day.

WALT WHITMAN

BROTHER AND SISTER

T

CANNOT choose but think upon the time
When our two lives grew like two buds that kiss
At lightest thrill from the bee's swinging chime,
Because one so near the other is.
He was the elder, and a little man
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,
And I the girl that, puppy-like, now ran,
Now lagged behind my brother's larger tread.
I held him wise, and when he talked to me
Of snakes and birds, and which God loved the best,
I thought his knowledge marked the boundary
Where men grow blind, though angels knew the rest.
If he said "Hush!" I tried to hold my breath;
Whenever he said "Come!" I stepped in faith.

ΊŢ

School parted us; we never found again That childish world where our two spirits mingled Like scents from varying roses that remain One sweetness, nor can evermore be singled; 50

THE SPIRIT OF CHILDHOOD

Yet the twin habit of that early time
Lingered for long about the heart and tongue:
We had been natives of one happy clime
And its dear accent to our utterance clung:
Till the dire years whose awful name is Change
Had grasped our souls still yearning in divorce.
And, pitiless, shaped them into two forms that range,
Two elements which sever their life's course.
But were another childhood world my share,
I would be born a little sister there.

GEORGE ELIOT

AT THE GATE

BEYOND the gate I see a hand, It beckons me and I must go, The garden plot grows small, and I Must rise and travel forth and know—

> Ah, little son, 'tis but the wide road winding Across the green hills out towards the sea; Wouldst find it hard to tread, and the sun blinding, Ah, little son, look not, stay thou with me.

Beyond the gate I hear a song,
The bravest song I ever heard,
Come out—it cries—and tarry not,
Thou craven heart that hast not stirred.

Ah, little son, 'tis but the old world calling,
And all the years gone by and yet to be,
But an old song of dawn and the sands falling,
Ah, little son, heed not, rest thou with me.

Beyond the gate the world is wide, And I have tarried all too long, And look, the least touch lifts the latch, That welcomes me to strife and song.

Ah, little son, thou shouldst not so have hastened
To leave thy tender garden bare to me,
Too soon the years had crowned thee, old and
chastened,
Ah, little son, faint not, God go with thee.
H. H. BASHFORD

LITTLE GIRLS

IF no one ever marries me,—
And I don't see why they should,
For nurse says I'm not pretty,
And I'm seldom very good—

If no one ever marries me
I shan't mind very much,
I shall buy a squirrel in a cage,
And a little rabbit-hutch;

I shall have a cottage near a wood,
And a pony all my own,
And a little lamb, quite clean and tame,
That I can take to town;

And when I'm getting really old,—
At twenty-eight or nine—
I shall buy a little orphan girl
And bring her up as mine.

LAURENCE ALMA TADEMA

THE SPIRIT OF CHILDHOOD

THE OLD SCHOOL (L.O.A.)

HERE where the white owl sweeps and cries, And dim fields fade as if in flight, And evening trembles into night, And roads like wavy ribbons rise,

And hills encircle, fold in fold—
Her pensive, purple towers loom;
And from a depth of melting gloom
Leap out her windows sparked with gold.

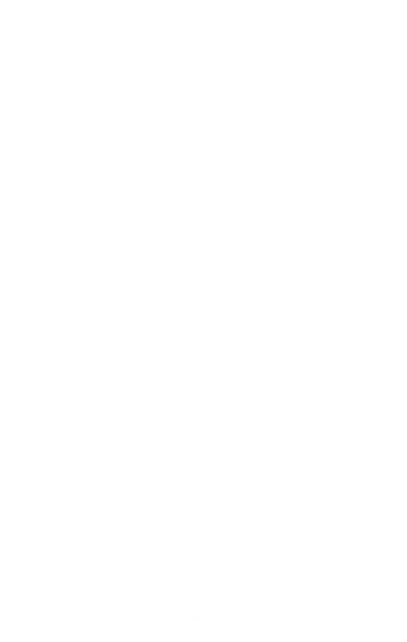
Upon the air soft voices go—
Faint echoes of a lovelier day
When life was ours, and life was May,
When the first shrinking violets blow.

And all the sadness of the years, And all the pains of old desire Revive, and, like a smouldering fire, Burn deeper for the rain of tears.

Yet are the dead not wholly gone; They bore her name by land and sea; Their higher parts were hers, and she, When all is done, reclaims her own.

So as her festal windows glow,
Within their castellated frame,
Each light becomes the ardent flame
Of some young soul of long ago.

THOMAS BURKE



SMALL PEOPLE IN THE NURSERY



SMALL PEOPLE IN THE NURSERY

GOLDEN slumbers kiss your eyes, Smites awake you when you rise. Sleep, pretty wantons; do not cry, And I will sing a lullaby: Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

Care is heavy, therefore sleep you;
You are care, and care must keep you.
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby:
Rock them, rock them, tullaby.
THOMAS DEKKER

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

A DREARY place would this earth be
Were there no little people in it;
The song of life would lose its mirth,
Were there no children to begin it;

No little forms, like buds to grow, And make the admiring heart surrender; No little hands on breast and brow, To keep the thrilling love-chords tender.

The sterner souls would grow more stern,
Unfeeling nature more inhuman,
And man to stoic coldness turn,
And woman would be tess than woman.

Life's song, indeed, would lose its charm,
Were there no babies to begin it;
A doleful place this world would be,
Were there no little people in it.
John Greenleaf Whittier

THERE he lay upon his back, The yearling creature, warm and moist with life To the bottom of his dimples-to the ends Of the lovely tumbled curls about his face, For since he had been covered over much To keep him from the light glare, both his cheeks Were hot and scarlet as the first live rose The shepherd's heart-blood ebbed away into The faster for his love. And love was here As instant; in the pretty baby mouth Shut close as if for dreaming that it sucked, The little naked feet, drawn up the way Of nested birdlings; everything so soft And tender—to the tiny holdfast hands, Which, closing on a finger into sleep Had kept the mould of it.

TO CHARLOTTE PULTENEY

IMELY blossom, infant fair, Fondling of a happy pair, Every morn and every night, Their solicitous delight; Sleeping, waking, still at ease, Pleasing, without skill to please. Little gossip, blithe and hale, Tattling many a broken tale, Singing many a tuneless song, Lavish of a heedless tongue. Simple maiden void of art, Babbling out the very heart, Yet abandoned to thy will, Yet imagining no ill, Yet too innocent to blush. Like the linnet in the bush, To the mother-linner's note Moduling her slender throat: Chirping forth thy petty joys, Wanton in the change of toys; Like the linnet green, in May Flitting to each bloomy spray: Wearied then, and glad of rest, Like the linnet in the nest. This thy present happy lot— This, in time, will be forgot: Other pleasures, other cares, Ever-busy Time prepares; And thou shalt in thy daughter see, This picture, once, resembled thee.

AMBROSE PHILLIPS

CRADLE SONG

SLEEP, baby, sleep! what ails my dear?
What ails my darling thus to cry?
Be still, my child, and lend thine ear
To hear me sing thy lullaby.
My pretty lamb, forbear to weep;
Be still, my dear; sweet baby, sleep!

When God with us was dwelling, here, In little babes He took delight; Such innocents as thou, my dear,

Are ever precious in His sight. Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep; Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep!

A little infant once was He;
And strength in weakness then was laid
Upon His virgin mother's knee,

That power to thee might be convey'd. Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep; Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep!

In this thy frailty and thy need
He friends and helpers doth prepare,
Which thee shall cherish, clothe, and feed,
For of thy weal they tender are.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep!

The King of Kings, when He was born, Had not so much for outward ease; By Him such dressings were not worn, Nor such-like swaddling-clothes as these. Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep; Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep!

Within a manger lodged thy Lord,
Where oxen lay, and asses fed;
Warm rooms we do to thee afford,
An easy cradle for a bed.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep!

The wants that He did then sustain
Have purchased wealth, my babe, for thee;
And by His torments and His pain,
Thy rest and ease secured be.
My baby, then, forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep!

Thou hast, yet more, to perfect this,
A promise and an earnest got
Of gaining everlasting bliss,
Though thou, my babe, perceiv'st it not.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep;
Be still, my babe; sweet baby, sleep!
George Wither

LULLABY

UPON my lap my sovereign sits
And sucks upon my breast;
Meantime his love maintains my life
And gives my sense her rest.
Sing lullaby, my little boy;
Sing lullaby, mine only joy!

When thou hast taken thy repast, Repose, my babe, on me. So may thy mother and thy nurse Thy cradle also be. Sing lullaby, my little boy; Sing lullaby, mine only joy!

I grieve that duty doth not work
All that my wishing would,
Because I would not be to thee
But in the best I should.
Sing lullaby, my little boy;
Sing lullaby, mine only joy!

Yet as I am, and as I may,
I must and will be thine,
Though all too little for thy self
Vouchsafing to be thine.
Sing lullaby, my little boy;
Sing lullaby, mine only joy!
RICHARD ROWLANDS

CRADLE SONG

SWEET dreams, form a shade O'er my lovely infant's head! Sweet dreams of pleasant streams By happy, silent, moony beams!

Sweet sleep with soft down Weave thy brows an infant crown! Sweet sleep, angel mild, Hover o'er my happy child!

Sweet smiles, in the night Hover over my delight! Sweet smiles, mother's smile, All the livelong night beguile.

Sweet moans, dovelike sighs, Chase not slumber from thine eyes! Sweet moans, sweeter smile, All the dovelike moans beguile.

Sleep, sleep, happy child! All creation slept and smiled. Sleep, sleep, happy sleep, While o'er thee doth mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face Holy image I can trace; Sweet babe once like thee Thy Maker lay, and wept for me:

Wept for me, for thee, for all, When He was an infant small. Thou His image ever see, Heavenly face that smiles on thee!

Smiles on thee, on me, on all,
Who became an infant small;
Infant smiles are His own smiles:
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.
WILLIAM BLAKE

CRADLE SONG

SLEEP, sleep, beauty bright, Dreaming in the joys of night; Sleep, sleep; in thy sleep Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face Soft desires I can trace, Secret joys and secret smiles, Little pretty infant wiles.

As thy softest limbs I feel, Smiles as of the morning steal O'er thy cheek, and o'er thy breast Where thy little heart doth rest.

Oh, the cunning wiles that creep
In thy little heart asleep;
When thy little heart doth wake,
Then the dreadful light shall break.

WILLIAM BLAKE

NURSE'S SONG

WHEN the voices of children are heard on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still.
"Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,
And the dews of night arise;
Come, come, leave off play, and let us away,
Till the morning appears in the skies."

"No, no, let us play, for it is yet day,
And we cannot go to sleep;
Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,
And the hills are all covered with sheep."
"Well, well, go and play till the light fades away,
And then go home to bed."
The little ones leaped, and shouted, and laughed,
And all the hills echoèd.

WILLIAM BLAKE

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE YEARS OLD

OVING she is, and tractable, though wild;
And innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
64

Mock-chastisement and partnership in play. And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth, Not less if unattended and alone Than when both young and old sit gathered round And take delight in its activity, Even so this happy creature of herself Is all-sufficient; solitude to her Is blithe society, who fills the air With gladness and involuntary songs. Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched; Unthought of, unexpected, as the stir Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow flowers; Or from before it chasing wantonly The many-coloured images impressed Upon the bosom of a placid lake. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

PARENTAL RECOLLECTIONS

A CHILD'S a plaything for an hour: Its pretty tricks we try For that, or for a longer space; Then tire and lay it by.

But I knew one that to itself
All reasons would control;
That would have mocked the sense of pain
Out of a grieved soul.

Thou struggler into loving arms, Young climber up of knees! When I forget thy thousand ways, Then life and all shall cease.

MARY LAMB

THE NEW-BORN INFANT

WHETHER beneath sweet beds of roses,
As foolish little Ann supposes,
The spirit of a babe reposes
Before it to the body come;
Or, as philosophy more wise
Thinks, it descendeth from the skies,
We know the babe's now in the room.

And that is all which is quite clear
Even to philosophy, my dear.
The God that made us can alone
Reveal from whence a spirit's brought
Into young life, to light, and thought;
And this the wisest man must own.

We'll talk now of the babe's surprise
When first he opens his new eyes,
And first receives delicious food.
Before the age of six or seven,
To mortal children is not given
Much reason, else I think he would

(And very naturally) wonder
What happy star he was born under,
That he should be the only care
Of the dear, sweet, food-giving lady
Who fondly calls him her own baby,
Her darling hope, her infant heir.

THE MOTHER'S RETURN

A MONTH, sweet little ones, is passed Since your dear mother went away,—And she to-morrow will return;
To-morrow is the happy day.

Oh, blessed tidings! thought of joy! The eldest heard with steady glee; Silent he stood; then laughed amain, And shouted, "Mother, come to me!"

Louder and louder did he shout, With witless hope to bring her near; "Nay, patience! patience, little boy! Your tender mother cannot hear."

I told of hills, and far-off towns And long, long vales to travel through;— He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed, But he submits; what can he do?

No strife disturbs his sister's breast: She wars not with the mystery Of time and distance, night and day, The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy Of kitten, bird, or summer fly; She dances, runs without an aim, She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note, And echoes back his sister's glee; They hug the infant in my arms, As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse, We rested in the garden bower; While sweetly shone the evening sun In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done,— Our rambles by the swift brook's side Far as the willow-skirted pool, Where two fair swans together glide.

We talked of change, of winter gone, Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray, Of birds that build their nests and sing, And "all since mother went away."

To her these tales they will repeat, To her our new-born tribes will show, The goslings green, the ass's colt, The lambs that in the meadow go.

—But, see, the evening star comes forth! To bed the children must depart; A moment's heaviness they feel, A sadness at the heart:

'Tis gone—and in a merry fit
They run upstairs in gamesome race;
I, too, infected by their mood,
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Five minutes past—and, oh, the change!
Asleep upon their beds they lie;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT

THE days are cold, the nights are long,
The North wind sings a doleful song;
Then hush again upon my breast;
All merry things are now at rest,
Save thee, my pretty love!

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
The crickets long have ceased their mirth;
There's nothing stirring in the house
Save one wee, hungry, nibbling mouse,
Then why so busy thou?
Nay! start not at the sparkling light;
'Tis but the moon that shines so bright
On the window-pane bedropped with rain:
Then, little darling! sleep again,
And wake when it is day.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

"OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

IN stature perfect, and in every gift
Which God would on His favourite work bestow,
Did our great Parent his pure form uplift,
And sprang from earth, the Lord of all below.

But Adam fell before a child was born, And want and weakness with his fall began; So his first offspring was a thing forlorn, In human shape, without the strength of man:

So, Heaven has doomed that all of Adam's race, Naked and helpless, shall their course begin—E'en at their birth confess their need of grace—And weeping, wail the penalty of sin.

Yet sure the babe is in the cradle blest, Since God Himself a baby deign'd to be— And slept upon a mortal mother's breast, And steep'd in baby tears—His Deity.

O sleep, sweet infant, for we all must sleep—
And wake like babes, that we may wake with Him,
Who watches still His own from harm to keep,
And o'er them spreads the wings of cherubim.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

THE SABBATH DAY'S CHILD

PURE, precious drop of dear mortality,
Untainted fount of life's meandering stream,
Whose innocence is like the dewy beam
Of morn, a visible reality,
Holy and quiet as a hermit's dream:
Unconscious witness to the promised birth
Of perfect good, that may not grow on earth,
Nor be computed by the worldly worth
And stated limits of morality;
Fair type and pledge of full redemption given,
Through Him that saith, "Of such is the kingdom of
Heaven!"

Sweet infant, whom thy brooding parents love For what thou art, and what they hope to see thee, Unhallow'd sprites and earth-born phantoms flee thee; Thy soft simplicity, a hovering dove,

That still keeps watch from blight and bane to free thee. With its weak wings, in peaceful care outspread, Fanning invisibly thy pillow'd head, Strikes evil powers with reverential dread, Beyond the sulphurous bolts of fabled Jove, Or whatsoe'er of amulet or charm Fond Ignorance devised to save poor souls from harm.

To see thee sleeping on thy mother's breast,
It were indeed a lovely sight to see—
Who would believe that restless sin can be
In the same world that holds such sinless rest?
Happy art thou, sweet babe, and happy she
Whose voice alone can still thy baby cries,
Now still itself; yet pensive smiles, and sighs,
And the mute meanings of a mother's eyes
Declare her thinking, deep felicity:
A bliss, my babe, how much unlike to thine,
Mingled with earthly fears, yet cheer'd with hope divine.

Thou breathing image of the life of Nature!
Say rather, image of a happy death—
For the vicissitudes of vital breath,
Of all infirmity the slave and creature,
That by the act of being perisheth,
Are far unlike that slumber's perfect peace
Which seems too absolute and pure to cease,
Or suffer diminution, or increase,
Or change of hue, proportion, shape, or feature;
A calm, it seems, that is not, shall not be,
Save in the silent depths of calm eternity.

A star reflected in a dimpling rill That moves as slow it hardly moves at all; The shadow of a white-robed waterfall Seen in the lake beneath when all is still;

A wandering cloud, that with its fleecy pall Whitens the lustre of an autumn moon, A sudden breeze that cools the cheek of noon, Not mark'd till miss'd—so soft it fades, and soon—Whatever else the fond inventive skill Of fancy may suggest cannot apply Fit semblance of the sleeping life of infancy.

Calm art thou as the blessed Sabbath eve,
The blessed Sabbath eve when thou wast born;
Yet sprightly as a summer Sabbath morn,
When surely 'twere a thing unmeet to grieve:
When ribbons gay the village maids adorn,
And Sabbath music, on the swelling gales,
Floats to the farthest nooks of winding vales,
And summons all the beauty of the dales.
Fit music this a stranger to receive,
And, lovely child, it rang to welcome thee,
Announcing thy approach with gladsome minstrelsy.

So be thy life—a gentle Sabbath, pure
From worthless strivings of the work-day earth:
May time make good the omen of thy birth,
Nor worldly care thy growing thoughts immure,
Nor hard-eyed thrift usurp the throne of mirth
On thy smooth brow. And though fast coming years
Must bring their fated dower of maiden fears,
Of timid blushes, sighs, and fertile tears,
Soft sorrow's sweetest offspring, and her cure;
May every day of thine be good and holy,
And thy worst woe a pensive Sabbath melancholy.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

LULLABY OF AN INFANT CHIEF

O HUSH thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight, Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright; The woods and the glens, from the towers which we see, They all are belonging, dear babie, to thee.

O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo,

O ho ro, i ri ri.

O, fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows, It calls but the warders that guard thy repose; Their bows would be bended, their blades would be red Ere the step of a foeman draws near to thy bed.

O ho ro, i ri ri, etc.

O, hush thee, my babie, the time will soon come When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum; Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may, For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.

O ho ro, i ri ri, etc.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

ON MY DEAR LOVE ISABELLA

HERE lies sweet Isabell in bed,
With a night-cap on her head;
Her skin is soft, her face is fair,
And she has very pretty hair;
She and I in bed lies nice,
And undisturbed by rats or mice;
She is disgusted with Mr. Worgan,
Though he plays upon the organ.
Her nails are neat, her teeth are white,
Her eyes are very, very bright;

In a conspicuous town she lives, And to the poor her money gives; Here ends sweet Isabella's story. And may it be much to her glory. MARJORIE FLEMING (" Pet Marjorie")

IN BED

I LOVE in Isa's bed to lie, Oh, such a joy and luxury! The bottom of the bed I sleep, And with great care within I creep; Oft I embrace her feet of lillys, But she has goton all the pillys. Her neck I never can embrace, But I do hug her feet in place. MARJORIE FLEMING ("Pet Marjorie")

GOLDEN-TRESSED ADELAIDE

CING, I pray, a little song, Mother dear! Neither sad nor very long: It is for a little maid, Golden-tressèd Adelaide! Therefore let it suit a merry, merry ear, Mother dear !

Let it be a merry strain, Mother dear! Shunning e'en the thought of pain: For our gentle child will weep, If the theme be dark and deep: And we will not draw a single tear, Mother dear!

In the Nursery

Childhood shall be all divine,

Mother dear!

And like endless summer shine:
Gay as Edward's shouts and cries,
Bright as Agnes' azure eyes;
Therefore let thy song be merry: dost thou hear,

Mother dear?

BARRY CORNWALL

LULLABY

PREAM, baby, dream! The stars are glowing; Hear'st thou the stream so softly flowing? All gently glide the hours, Above no tempest lowers, Below are fragrant flowers In silence growing.

Dream, baby, dream!

Sleep, baby, sleep, till dawn to-morrow;
Why should'st thou weep who know'st not sorrow?
Too soon come pains and fears,
Too soon a cause for tears,
So from thy future years
No sadness borrow.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

BARRY CORNWALL

THE FAIRY QUEEN

A LITTLE fairy comes at night,
Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,
And when a good child goes to bed
She waves her wand from right to left,
And makes a circle round its head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things, Of fountains filled with fairy fish, And trees that bear delicious fruit And bow their branches at a wish:

Of arbours filled with dainty scents
From lovely flowers that never fade;
Bright flies that glitter in the sun,
And glow-worms shining in the shade:

And talking birds with gifted tongues, For singing songs and telling tales, And pretty dwarfs to show the way Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

But when a bad child goes to bed, From left to right she weaves her rings, And then it dreams all through the night Of only ugly, horrid things!

Then lions come with glaring eyes,
And tigers growl, a dreadful noise,
And ogres draw their cruel knives,
To shed the blood of girls and boys.

Then stormy waves rush on to drown, Or raging flames come scorching round, Fierce dragons hover in the air, And serpents crawl along the ground,

In the Nursery

Then wicked children wake and weep,
And wish the long black gloom away;
But good ones love the dark, and find
The night as pleasant as the day.
THOMAS HOOD

TO A SLEEPING CHILD

ART thou a thing of mortal birth, Whose happy home is on our earth? Or art thou what thy form would seem— The phantom of a blessed dream?

Oh, that my spirit's eye could see
Whence burst those gleams of ecstasy!
That light of dreaming soul appears
To play from thoughts above thy years.
Thou smilest as if thy soul were soaring
To Heaven, and Heaven's God adoring!
And who can tell what visions high
May bless an infant's sleeping eye?
What brighter throne can brightness find
To reign on, than an infant's mind,
Ere sin destroy, or error dim,
The glory of the Seraphim?

John Wilson

SKETCH OF A YOUNG LADY FIVE MONTHS OLD

MY pretty, budding, breathing flower, Methinks, if I to-morrow Could manage, just for half-an-hour, Sir Joshua's brush to borrow,

I might immortalise a few
Of all the myriad graces
Which time, while yet they all are new,
With newer still replaces.

I'd paint, my child, your deep blue eyes,
Their quick and earnest flashes;
I'd paint the fringe that round them lies,
The fringe of long dark lashes;
I'd draw with most fastidious care
One eyebrow, then the other,
And that fair forehead, broad and fair,
The forehead of your mother,

I'd oft retouch the dimpled cheek
Where health in sunshine dances;
And oft the pouting lips, where speak
A thousand voiceless fancies;
And the soft neck would keep me long,
The neck, more smooth and snowy
Than ever yet in schoolboy's song
Had Caroline or Chloe.

Nor less on those twin rounded arms
My new-found skill would linger,
Nor less upon the rosy charms
Of every tiny finger,
Nor slight the small feet, little one,
So prematurely clever
That, though they neither walk nor run,
I think they'd jump for ever.

But then your odd endearing ways— What study e'er could catch them? Your aimless gestures, endless plays— What canvas e'er could match them?

Your lively leap of merriment, Your murmur of petition, Your serious silence of content, Your laugh of recognition.

Here were a puzzling toil, indeed,
For Art's most fine creations!—
Grow on, sweet baby; we will need
To note your transformations
No picture of your form or face,
Your waking or your sleeping,
But that which Love shall daily trace,
And trust to Memory's keeping.

Hereafter, when revolving years
Have made you tall and twenty,
And brought you blended hopes and fears,
And sighs and slaves in plenty,
May those who watch our little saint
Among her tasks and duties,
Feel all her virtues hard to paint,
As now we deem her beauties.
WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED

THE CASTLE-BUILDER

A GENTLE boy, with soft and silken locks, A dreamy boy, with brown and tender eyes, A castle-builder, with his wooden blocks, And towers that touch imaginary skies.

A fearless rider on his father's knee, An eager listener unto stories told At the Round Table of the nursery, Of heroes and adventures manifold.

There will be other towers for thee to build;
There will be other steeds for thee to ride;
There will be other legends, and all filled
With greater marvels and more glorified.

Build on, and make thy castles high and fair,
Rising and reaching upward to the skies;
Listen to voices in the upper air,
Nor lose thy simple faith in mysteries.
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

WEE WILLIE WINKIE

WEE Willie Winkie rins through the toon,
Upstairs and downstairs in his nicht-gown,
Tirlin' at the window, crying at the lock,
"Are the weans in their bed, for it's now ten o'clock?"

"Hey, Willie Winkie, are ye comin' ben? The cat's singing grey thrums to the sleepin' hen, The dog's speldert on the floor, and disna gie a cheep, But here's a waukrife laddie that wunna fa' asleep!

"Onything but sleep, you rogue! glow'ring like the moon,
Rattlin' in an airn jug wi' an airn spoon,
Rumblin', tumblin', roon about, crawin' like a cock,
Skirlin' like I kenna what, wauk'nin' sleepin' folk.

"Hey, Willie Winkie—the wean's in a creel! Wamblin' aff a bodie's knee like a verra eel, Ruggin' at the cat's lug, and ravelin' a' her thrums—Hey, Willie Winkie—see, there he comes!"

Wearit is the mither that has a stoorie wean, A wee stumpie stousie, that canna rin his lane, That has a battle aye wi' sleep afore he'll close an e'e— But a kiss frae aff his rosy lips gies strength anew to me. WILLIAM MILLER

SLEEPING AND WATCHING

CLEEP on, baby, on the floor, Tired of all the playing! Sleep with smile the sweeter for That, you dropped away in! On your curls' full roundness, stand Golden lights serenely. One cheek, pushed out by the hand, Folds the dimple inly. Little head and little foot Heavy laid for pleasure, Underneath the lids half shut, Slants the shining azure.— Open-soul in noonday sun, So, you lie and slumber! Nothing evil having done, Nothing can encumber.

I, who cannot sleep as well,
Shall I sigh to view you?
Or sigh further to foretell
All that may undo you?
Nay, keep smiling, little child,
Ere the sorrow neareth.
I will smile too! patience mild
Pleasure's token weareth.

Nay, keep sleeping before loss. I shall sleep though losing! As by cradle, so by cross,' Sure is the reposing.

And God knows Who sees us twain,
Child at childish leisure,
I am near as tired of pain
As you seem of pleasure.
Very soon too, by His grace
Gently wrapt around me,
Shall I show as calm a face,
Shall I sleep as soundly.
Differing in this, that you
Clasp your playthings, sleeping,
While my hand shall drop the few
Given to my keeping.

Differing in this, that I

Sleeping shall be colder,
And in waking presently,
Brighter to beholder.
Differing in this beside
(Sleeper, have you heard me?
Do you move, and open wide
Eyes of wonder toward me?)—
That while you, I thus recall
From your sleep, I solely,
Me from mine an angel shall
With réveillé holy.
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

In the Nursery

A CHILD ASLEEP

HOW he sleepeth, having drunken
Weary childhood's mandragore!
From his pretty eyes have sunken
Pleasures to make room for more—
Sleeping near the withered nosegay which he pulled the
day before.

Nosegays! leave them for the waking.
Throw them earthward where they grew.
Dim are such, beside the breaking
Amaranths he looks unto:
Folded eyes see brighter colours than the open eyer do.

Heaven-flowers, rayed by shadows golden From the palms they sprang beneath, Now perhaps divinely holden, Swing against him in a wreath:

We may think so from the quickening of his bloom and of his breath.

Vision unto vision calleth,
While the young child dreameth on.
Fair, O dreamer, thee befalleth
With the glory thou hast won!
Darker wert thou in the garden, yestermorn by summer sun.

We should see the spirits ringing
Round thee,—were the clouds away.
'Tis the child-heart draws them, singing
In the silent-seeming clay.
Singing!—stars that seem the mutest, go in music all the
way.

83

As the moths around a taper,
As the bees around a rose,
As the gnats around a vapour,
So the spirits group and close
Round about a holy childhood, as if drinking its repose.

Shapes of brightness overlean thee,
Flash their diadems of youth
On the ringlets which half screen thee,
While thou smilest . . . not in sooth
Thy smile, but the overfair one, dropt from some ætherial
mouth.

Haply it is angels' duty,
During slumber, shade by shade
To fine down this childish beauty
To the thing it must be made,

Softly, softly! make no noises!

Ere the world shall bring it praises, or the tomb shall see it fade.

Now he lieth dead and dumb.

Now he hears the angels' voices

Folding silence in the room.

Now he muses deep the meaning of the Heaven-words as they come.

Speak not! he is consecrated.

Breathe no breath across his eyes

Lifted up and separated

On the hand of God he lies,

In a sweetness beyond touching,—held in cloistral sanctities.

Could ye bless him—father—mother,

Bless the dimple in his cheek?

Dare ye look at one another,

And the benediction speak?

Would ye not break out in weeping, and confess your selves too weak?

He is harmless—ye are sinful.
Ye are troubled—he, at ease.
From his slumber, virtue winful
Floweth outward with increase.
Dare not bless him! but be blessed by his peace—and go in peace.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

SWEET AND LOW

SWEET and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Alfred Tennyson

PHILIP MY KING

COK at me with thy large brown eyes,
Philip my king!
Round whom the enshadowing purple lies
Of babyhood's royal dignities;
Lay on my neck thy tiny hand
With love's invisible sceptre laden;
I am thine Esther to command
Till thou shalt find a queen-handmaiden,
Philip my king!

O the day when thou goest a-wooing,
Philip my king!
When those beautiful lips 'gin suing,
And some gentle hearts' bars undoing
Thou dost enter, love-crown'd, and there
Sittest love-glorified. Rule kindly,
Tenderly, o'er thy kingdom fair,
For we that love, ah! we love so blindly,
Philip my king!

Up from thy sweet mouth—up to thy brow,
Philip my king!
The spirit that there lies sleeping now
May rise like a giant, and make men bow
As to one heaven-chosen amongst his peers:
My Saul, than thy brethren taller and fairer,
Let me behold thee in future years;
Yet thy hand needeth a circlet rarer,
Philip my king!

A wreath not of gold, but palm. One day,
Philip my king!
Thou too must tread, as we trod, a way

Thorny and cruel and cold and gray:
Rebels within thee and foes without
Will snatch at thy crown. But march on, glorious
Martyr, yet monarch, till angels shout,
As thou sitt'st at the feet of God victorious,
"Philip the king!"

DINAH MULOCK CRAIK

TO A SLEEPING CHILD

IPS, lips, open!
Up comes a little bird that lives inside—
Up comes a little bird, and peeps, and out he flies.

All the day he sits inside, and sometimes he sings, Up he comes, and out he goes at night to spread his wings.

Little bird, little bird, whither will you go? Far away around the world, while nobody can know.

Little bird, little bird, whither do you flee? Far away round the world, while nobody can see.

Little bird, little bird, how long will you roam? All round the world and around again home;

Round the round world, and back through the air, When the morning comes, the little bird is there.

Back comes the little bird, and looks and in he flies, Up wakes the little boy, and opens both his eyes. Sleep, sleep, little boy, little bird's away; Little bird will come again, by the peep of day;

Sleep, sleep, little boy, the little bird must go
Round about the world, while nobody can know.
Sleep, sleep sound, little bird goes round,
Round and round he goes; sleep, sleep sound.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

THE TOYS

IY little son, who looked from thoughtful eyes, And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise, Having my law the seventh time disobeyed, I struck him, and dismiss'd With hard words and unkiss'd, His mother, who was patient, being dead. Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep, I visited his bed, But found him slumbering deep, With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet From his late sobbing wet. And I, with moan, Kissing away his tears, left others of my own: For, on a table drawn beside his head, He had put, within his reach, A box of counters and a red-veined stone, A piece of glass abraded by the beach, And six or seven shells, A bottle with bluebells, And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful To content his sad heart.

To content his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said:
Ah, when at last we lie with trancèd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
88

And thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood,
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
"I will be sorry for their childishness."

COVENTRY PATMORE

CREEP AFORE YE GANG

CREEP awa', my bairnie, creep afore ye gang, Cock ye baith your lugs to your auld Granny's sang;

Gin ye gang as far ye will think the road lang— Creep awa', my bairnie, creep afore ye gang.

Creep awa,' my bairnie, ye're ower young to learn To tot up and down yet, my bonnie wee bairn; Better creeping cannie, than fa'ing wi' a bang, Duntin' a' your wee brow—creep afore ye gang.

Ye'll creep, an' ye'll laugh, an' ye'll nod to your mother, Watching ilka step o' your wee dowsy brother; Rest ye on the floor till your wee limbs grow strang, And ye'll be a braw chield yet—creep afore ye gang.

The wee birdie fa's when it tries ower soon to flee;
Folks are sure to tumble when they climb ower hie;
They wha dinna walk aright are sure to come to wrong—

Creep awa, my bairnie, creep afore ye gang.

JAMES BALLANTINE

THE UNKNOWN TONGUE

THAT baby, I knew her in days of old.
You doubt that I lived in a land made fair
With many soft moons, and was mated there?
Now mark you! I saw but to-day in the street
A sweet girl-baby, whose delicate feet
As yet upon earth took uncertain hold;
Yet she carried a doll as she toddled alone,
As she talked to that doll in a tongue her own
The sweet little stranger! why, her face still bore
The look of the people from the far star-shore.

Ah! you doubt me still? then listen: While you Have looked to the earth for gold, why I——
I have looked to the steeps of the starry sky.
And which, indeed, had the fairer view
Of the infinite things, the dreamer or you? . . .
How blind be men when they will not see!
If men must look in the dust, or look
At best, with the eyes bound down to a book,
Why, who shall deny that it comes to me
To sail white ships through the ether sea?

Yes, I am a dreamer. Yet, while you dream,
Then I am awake. When a child, back through
The gates of the past I peered, and I knew
The land I had lived in. I saw the broad stream;
Saw rainbows that compassed a world in their reach;
I saw my beloved go down on the beach;
Saw her lean to this earth, saw her looking for me
As shipmen look from their ships at sea. . . .
The sweet girl-baby! Why, that unknown tongue
Is the tongue she has talked since the stars were young!

JOAQUIN MILLER

LULLABY

THE rooks' nests do rock on the tree-top,
Where few foes can stand;
The martin's is high and is deep
In the steep cleft of sand;
But thou, love, a-sleeping where footsteps
Might come to thy bed,
Hast father and mother to watch thee
And shelter thy head.
Lullaby, Lilybrow, lie asleep;
Blest be thy rest.

And some birds do keep under roofing
Their young from the storm;
And some wi' nest-hoodings of moss
And o' wool, do lie warm.
And we will look well to the house-roof
That o'er thee might leak,
And the beast that might beat on thy window
Shall not smite thy cheek.
Lullaby, Lilybrow, lie asleep;
Blest be thy rest.

WILLIAM BARNES

BABY MAY

CHEEKS as soft as July peaches,
Lips whose dewy scarlet teaches
Poppies paleness—round large eyes
Ever great with new surprise,
Minutes fill'd with shadeless gladness,
Minutes just as brimm'd with sadness,

Happy smiles and wailing cries, Crows and laughs and tearful eyes, Lights and shadows swifter born Than on windswept Autumn corn, Ever some new tiny notion Making every limb all motion— Catching up of legs and arms, Throwings back and small alarms, Clutching fingers-straightening jerks, Twining feet whose each toe works, Kickings up and straining risings, Mother's ever new surprisings, Hands all wants and looks all wonder At all things the heavens under, Tiny scorns of smiled reprovings That have more of love than lovings, Mischiefs done with such a winning Archness, that we prize such sinning, Breakings dire of plates and glasses, Graspings small at all that passes, Pullings off of all that's able To be caught from tray or table, Silences—small meditations Deep as thoughts of cares for nations, Breaking into wisest speeches In a tongue that nothing teaches, All the thoughts of whose possessing Must be wooed to light by guessing; Slumbers—such sweet angel-seemings That we'd ever have such dreamings, Till from sleep we see thee breaking, And we'd always have thee waking; Wealth for which we know no measure, Pleasure high above all pleasure, Gladness brimming over gladness. Joy in care—delight in sadness,

In the Nursery

Loveliness beyond completeness,
Sweetness distancing all sweetness,
Beauty all that beauty may be—
That's May Bennett—that's my baby.
WILLIAM BENNETT

SONG TO A BABE

LITTLE babe, while burns the west,
Warm thee, warm thee, in my breast,
While the moon doth shine her best,
And the dews distil not.

All the land so sad, so fair— Sweet its toils are, blest its care; Child, we may not enter there! Some there are that will not.

Fain would I thy margins know, Land of work and land of snow; Land of life, whose rivers flow On and on, and stay not.

Fain would I thy small limbs fold While the weary hours are told, Little babe in cradle cold.

Some there are that may not.

JEAN INGELOW

FAY

ITTLE FAY, than a bird more tender,
Frail as reed, as a reed is, slender,
All the flowers in the hedgerows love her:
You may see, if you choose, the daisies
Look up, blushing, in grassy places,
Full of joy, as her feet trip over.

Such wild lights in her shy eyes lighten,
Flash and flicker, and darken, brighten,
Her white brow mid her sunny hair is
Set so smoothly and set so purely,
You divine how she must be, surely,
Changeling come from a land of fairies.

Do we tremble—who know she chances
On what friends, in her dreams and trances—
Lest they claim her, who've nine years lent her?
Will they trouble to lift a finger
Just for sign, if she wills to linger?
We'll so love her, we shall content her.

THOMAS ASHE

A LULLABY

BABY, baby, hush-a-bye, Must you be awake now? Sweet my lamb, come, close your eye, Sleep for mother's sake now.

All the babies in the world
Lie asleep but you now:
Nigger babies, brown and curled,
In the sand dream too now.

Baby mice are safe from harm In their downy holes now; Baby squirrels lie all warm In the hollow boles now.

Baby buds are fast asleep Rocking on the trees now; Baby fishes, far and deep, Slumber in the seas now.

All the baby stars above
Dream in cloudy bed now;
Mother moon, for all her love,
Sleeping, hides her head now.

Baby, baby, hush-a-bye,
Cradled on my breast now,
Sweet my lamb, come, close your eye,
Let your mother rest now.
LAURENCE ALMA TADEMA

A BLESSING FOR THE BLESSED

WHEN the sun has left the hill-top,
And the daisy-fringe is furled,
When the birds from wood and meadow
In their hidden nests are curled,
Then I think of all the babies
That are sleeping in the world. . . .

There are babies in the high lands
And habies in the low,
There are pale ones wrapped in furry skins
On the margin of the snow,
And brown ones naked in the isles
Where all the spices grow.

And some are in the palace,
On a white and downy bed,
And some are in the garret
With a clout beneath their head,
And some are on the cold, hard earth,
Whose mothers have no bread.

O little men and women,
Dear flowers yet unblown—
O little kings and beggars
Of the pageant yet unshown—
Sleep soft and dream pale dreams now,
To-morrow is your own.

LAURENCE ALMA TADEMA

BARTHOLOMEW

BARTHOLOMEW
Is very sweet,
From sandy hair
To rosy feet.

Bartholomew
Is six months old,
And dearer far
Than pearls or gold.

Bartholomew
Has deep blue eyes,
Round pieces dropped
From out the skies.

Bartholomew
Is hugged and kissed!
He loves a flower
In either fist.

Bartholomew's
My saucy son;
No mother has
A sweeter one!

NORMAN GALE

MOTHER SONG (FROM THE PORTUGUESE)

HEAVY my heart is, heavy to carry,
Full of soft foldings, of downy enwrapments— And the outer fold of all is love, And the next soft fold is love, And the next, finer and softer, is love again; And were they unwound before the eyes More folds and more folds and more folds would unroll Of love—always love, And, quite at the last, Deep in the nest, in the soft-packed nest, One last fold, turned back, would disclose You, little heart of my heart, Laid there so warm, so soft, so soft, Not knowing where you lie, nor how softly, Nor why your nest is so soft, Nor how your nest is so warm. You, little heart of my heart, You lie in my heart, Warm, safe and soft as this body of yours, This dear kissed body of yours that lies Here in my arms and sucks the strength from my breast, The strength you will break my heart with one of these days.

E. NESBIT

TO A CHILD (ROSAMUND)

THE fairies have been busy while you slept:
They have been laughing where the sad rain wept,

They have taught beauty to the ignorant flowers, Set tasks of hope to weary wind-torn bowers,

And heard the lessons learned in school-rooms cold By seedling snapdragon and marigold. At dawn, while still you slept, I grew aware How good the fairies are, how many and how fair.

The fairy whose delightful gown is red Across a corner of our garden sped, And, where her flying raiment fluttered past, It's roseate reflection still is cast; Red poppies by the rhododendron's side, Peonies gorgeous in their summer pride, And red May-bushes by the old red wall Shower down their crimson petals over all.

Then she whose gown is gold, and gold her hair, Swept down the golden steep straight sunbeam-stair, She lit the tulip lamps, she lit the torch Of hollyhock beside the cottage porch. She dressed the honeysuckle in fringe of gold, She gave the king-cups fairy wealth to hold, She kissed St. John's wort till it opened wide, She set the yarrow by the river side.

Then came the lady all whose robes are white: She made the pale buds blossom in delight, Set silver stars upon the jasmine's hair, And gave the stream white lily-buds to wear. She painted lilies white, and pearl-white phlox, White poppies, passion-flowers, and grey-leaved stocks. Her pure kind touch redeemed the most forlorn And even the vile petunia smiled, new-born.

The dearest fairy of all—green is her gown— She kissed the plane-trees in the tiresome town, She smoothed the pastures and the lawn's pale sheen, She decked the boughs with hangings fresh and green, 98

She showed each flower the one and only way Its beauty of shape and colour to display: She taught the world to be a paradise Of changing leaf and blade, for tired eyes.

Then, one and all, they came where you were laid In your strait bed, my little lovely maid; The red-robed fairy kissed your lips, your face, The white-robed made your heart her dwelling-place. Into your eyes the green-robed fairy smiled; The golden fairy touched your dreams, my child, And one, not named, but mightiest, made my dear The innermost rose of the re-flowered year.

E. NESBIT

TO CHRISTINA AT NIGHTFALL

LITTLE thing, ah! little mouse,
Creeping through the twilit house,
To watch within the shadow of my chair
With large blue eyes; the firelight on your hair
Doth glimmer gold and faint,
And on your woollen gown
That folds a-down
From steadfast little face to square-set feet.

Ah, sweet! ah, little one! so like a carven saint, With your unflinching eyes, unflinching face. Like a small angel, carved in a high place, Watching unmoved across a gabled town; When I am weak and old, And lose my grip, and crave my small reward Of tolerance and tenderness and ruth, The children of your dawning day shall hold

The reins we drop and wield the judge's sword, And your swift feet shall tread upon my heels, And I be Ancient Error, you New Truth, And I be crushed by your advancing wheels. . . .

Good-night! The fire is burning low,
Put out the lamp;
Lay down the weary little head
Upon the small white bed.
Up from the sea the night winds blow
Across the hill, across the marsh;
Chill and harsh, harsh and damp,
The night winds blow.
But, while the slow hours go,
I, who must fall before you, late shall wait and keep
Watch and ward,
Vigil and guard,
Where you sleep.

FORD MADOX HUEFFER

CRADLE SONG

THE little yachts swing lanterns at their bows, The little yachts like stars to harbour creep, The little yachts, they fold their tired sails, Their baby hulls, how fast they fall asleep.

So let my heart thy harbour be, so let Thy little lamp, held safe awhile from sea, Rock here at rest, oh babe of mine, and drop, For this one hour, its starshine into me.

H. H. BASHFORD

PARLIAMENT HILL

HAVE you seen the lights of London how they twinkle, twinkle, twinkle,

Yellow lights, and silver lights, and crimson lights and blue?

And there among the other lights is Daddy's little lantern-light,

Bending like a finger-tip and beckoning to you.

Never was so tall a hill for tiny feet to scramble up, Never was so strange a world to startle little eyes; Half of it as black as ink, with ghostly feet to fall on it, And half of it all filled with lamps and cheerful sounds and cries.

Lamps in golden palaces, and station-lamps, and steamer lamps,

Very nearly all the lamps that Mother ever knew, And there among the other lamps is Daddy's little

lantern-lamp,
Bending like a finger-tip and beckoning to you.

H. H. BASHFORD

THE PILOT BARK

E ACH cradle a ship—white-sailed, divinely planned,
On the quiet harbour bosom gently set
With brave hopes freighted for some splendid land
Beyond the clamorous passage of the bar,
Where the wild waters are.
And yet,
Though wrought so frail,
Resistless flasheth by the slender sail,

With the soft breath of ministrant angel-wings Silently filled,
Riding unshocked—where broader vessels quail Spent with far wanderings,
Broken with storm, or stilled
If the winds should fail.

And haply in some stress of night and doubt
Of such tired mariners reckless of their way,
Their guiding stars blurred out;
To worn eyes straining through the wild storm-spray,
Gleams from the pitiless dark
A heartening ray—
The white sail of the cradle pilot-bark!

Joseph Thorp

THE DREAM-CHILD (From "THE HAPPY HEARTH")

EAR dream-maiden, demure and fearless,
Facing gravely a world yet tearless,
Eager to follow and careless to capture,
Shy as a dove, as divinely free—
Who shall unfold thine inmost dreamings,
Track to their source thine April beamings,
Child of a fleeting moment's rapture,
That art for ever yet never will be?

Her face is clear as midsummer weather,
Lips meet light as a falling feather,
Dark her hair is, trembling to ringlets,
Her very voice is a tune sung low;
And I think she is come so late from Heaven,
The grace of her soul is as seven times seven,
White as the flash of a sea-bird's winglets,
Strange as a story of long ago.

In rose-winged dreams her heart is enfolden, As was mine in a happy olden
Golden summer when life was laughter,—
Was it long years, or yesterday?—
Now shadowy memories sullenly darken
The pearl-dewed portals; and ever I hearken
To vexing voices following after,
Whisp'ring—"Here is an end of May!"

Softly I fancy she sleeps in the musky
Scents that are borne to her lips by the dusky
Night as it flows to the marge of morning,
Cloaking the garden silverly blue. . . .
Ah, heart-of-mine, I have love to lavish,
Love like a maid's, as a maid's is, slavish,
Love that a maid might pass in scorning—
Dream-child dear, it is thine: Thou art true!

THOMAS BURKE



SMALL PEOPLE HERE AND THERE



SMALL PEOPLE HERE AND THERE

THE LITTLE ONES

THEY have such tiny feet. They have gone so short way to meet The years which are required to break Their steps to evenness, and make Them go more sure and slow. They are such little hands! Be kind; things are so new, and life but stands A step beyond the doorway. All around New days have found Such tempting things to shine upon; and so $m{T}$ he hands are tempted oft, you know, They are such fond clear eyes! That widen to surprise At every turn! They are so often held To sun or showers: showers soon dispelled By looking in our face. Love asks for these much grace. They are such fair, frail gifts. Uncertain as the rifts Of light that lie along the sky. They may not be here by-and-by. Give them not love, but more above And harder, patience with the love.

Anon.

A LITTLE child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
That always finds and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

HERE AND THERE

TO A CHILD OF QUALITY, FIVE YEARS OLD (THE AUTHOR THEN FORTY)

ORDS, knights, and squires, the numerous band That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters, Were summoned by her high command, To show their passions by their letters.

My pen amongst the rest I took,
Lest those bright eyes that cannot read
Should dart their kindling fires, and look
The power they have to be obey'd.

Nor quality, nor reputation
Forbids me yet my flame to tell,
Dear five-years-old befriends my passion,
And I may write till she can spell.

For while she makes her silkworms' beds With all the tender things I swear; Whilst all the bouse my passion reads In papers round her baby's hair;

She may receive and own my flame,
For, though the strictest prudes should know it,
She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,
And I for an unhappy poet.

Then too, alas! when she shall tear
The rhymes some younger rival sends;
She'll give me leave to write, I fear,
And we shall still continue friends.

For, as our different ages move,
'Tis so ordained (would Fate but mend it!)
That I shall be past making love
When she begins to comprehend it.

MATTHEW PRIOR

A SONG UPON MISS HARRIET HANBURY (ADDRESSED TO THE REV. MR. BIRT)

DEAR Doctor of St. Mary's, In the hundred of 'Bergavenny, I've seen such a lass With a shape and a face, As never was match'd by any.

Such wit, such bloom, and such beauty Has this girl of Ponty-Pool, sir, With eyes that would make The toughest heart ache, And the wisest man a fool, sir.

At our fair t'other day she appear'd, sir, And the Welshmen all flock'd and view'd her; And all of them said, She was fit to have been made A wife for Owen Tudor.

They would ne'er have been tired of gazing, And so much her charms did please, sir, That all of them sat Till their ale grew flat, And cold was their toasted cheese, sir.

How happy the lord of the manor, That shall be of her possest, sir; For all must agree Who my Harriet shall see, She's a Harriet of the best, sir.

HERE AND THERE

Then pray make a ballad about her; We know you have wit if you'd show it, Then don't be ashamed, You can never be blamed,— For a prophet is often a poet!

"But why don't you make one yourself, then?"
I suppose I by you shall be told, sir!
This beautiful piece
Of Eve's flesh is my niece—
And besides, she's but five years old, sir!

But tho', my dear friend, she's no older, In her face it may plainly be seen, sir, That this angel of five, Will, if she's alive, Be a goddess at fifteen, sir.

CHARLES WILLIAMS

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF A YOUNG LADY FOUR YEARS OLD

LD creeping time, with silent tread,
Has stol'n four years o'er Molly's head:
The rosebud opens on her cheek,
The meaning eyes begin to speak;
And in each smiling look is seen
The innocence which plays within.
Nor is the faltering tongue confined
To lisp the dawning of the mind,
But firm and full her words convey
The little all they have to say;
And each fond parent, as they fall,
Finds volumes in that little all,

May every charm which now appears
Increase and brighten with her years!
And may that same old creeping time
Go on till she has reached her prime,
Then, like a master of his trade,
Stand still, nor hurt the work he made.
WILLIAM WHITEHEAD

THE BABES IN THE WOOD

TOW ponder well, you parents dear,
These words which I shall write;
A doleful story you shall hear
In time brought forth to light.
A gentleman of good account
In Norfolk dwelt of late,
Who did in honour far surmount
Most men of his estate.

Sore sick he was and like to die, No help his life could save; His wife by him as sick did lie, And both possest one grave. No love between these two was lost, Each was to other kind; In love they lived, in love they died, And left two babes behind:

The one a fine and pretty boy
Not passing three years old,
The other a girl more young than he,
And framed in beauty's mould.
The father left his little son,
As plainly did appear,
When he to perfect age should come,
Three hundred pounds a-year.

HERE AND THERE

And to his little daughter Jane,
Five hundred pounds in gold,
To be paid down on marriage-day,
Which might not be controll'd.
But if the children chance to die
Ere they to age should come,
Their uncle should possess their wealth;
For so the will did run.

"Now, brother," said the dying man,
"Look to my children dear,
Be good unto my boy and girl,
No friends else have they here:
To God and you I recommend
My children dear this day;
But little while be sure we have
Within this world to stay.

"You must be father and mother both, And uncle, all in one; God knows what will become of them When I am dead and gone." With that bespake their mother dear: "O brother kind," quoth she, "You are the man must bring our babes To wealth or misery.

"And if you keep them carefully,
Then God will you reward;
But if you otherwise should deal,
God will your deeds regard."
With lips as cold as any stone
They kiss'd their children small:
"God bless you both, my children dear!"
With that the tears did fall.

These speeches then their brother spake To this sick couple there:
"The keeping of your little ones, Sweet sister, do not fear;
God never prosper me nor mine, Nor aught else that I have,
If I do wrong your children dear
When you are laid in grave!"

The parents being dead and gone,
The children home he takes,
And brings them straight into his house,
Where much of them he makes.
He had not kept these pretty babes
A twelvemonth and a day,
But, for their wealth, he did devise
To make them both away.

He bargain'd with two ruffians strong, Which were of furious mood, That they should take these children young And slay them in a wood. He told his wife an artful tale: He would the children send To be brought up in London town With one that was his friend.

Away then went those pretty babes Rejoicing at that tide, Rejoicing with a merry mind They should on cock-horse ride. They prate and prattle pleasantly, As they ride on the way, To those that should their butchers be, And work their lives' decay:

HERE AND THERE

So that the pretty speech they had Made murder's heart relent; And they that undertook the deed Full sore did now repent. Yet one of them, more hard of heart, Did vow to do his charge, Because the wretch that hired him Had paid him very large.

The other won't agree thereto, So here they fall to strife: With one another they did fight About the children's life: And he that was of mildest mood Did slay the other there, Within an unfrequented wood; The babes did quake for fear!

He took the children by the hand,
Tears standing in their eye,
And bade them straightway follow him,
And look they did not cry;
And two long miles he led them on,
While they for food complain:
"Stay here," quoth he; "I'll bring you bread
When I come back again."

These pretty babes, with hand in hand, Went wandering up and down; But never more could see the man Approaching from the town. Their pretty lips with blackberries Were all besmear'd and dyed; And when they saw the darksome night, They sat them down and cried.

Thus wander'd these poor innocents, Till death did end their grief; In one another's arms they died, As wanting due relief:
No burial this pretty pair
From any man receives,
Till Robin Redbreast piously
Did cover them with leaves.

And now the heavy wrath of God Upon their uncle fell; Yea, fearful fiends did haunt his house—His conscience felt an hell: His barns were fired, his goods consumed, His lands were barren made, His cattle died within the field, And nothing with him stay'd.

And in a voyage to Portugal
Two of his sons did die;
And, to conclude, himself was brought
To want and misery:
He pawn'd and mortgaged all his land
Ere seven years came about,
And now at last this wicked act
Did by this means come out:

The fellow that did take in hand These children for to kill, Was for a robbery judged to die—Such was God's blessed will: Who did confess the very truth, As here hath been display'd: The uncle having died in jail, Where he for debt was laid.

HERE AND THERE

You that executors be made, And overseers eke, Of children that be fatherless, And infants mild and meek, Take you example by this thing, And yield to each his right, Lest God with such-like misery Your wicked minds requite.

Anon.

TO A CHILD FIVE YEARS OLD

RAIREST flower, all flowers excelling, Which in Milton's page we see; Flowers of Eve's embower'd dwelling Are, my fair one, types of thee.

Mark, my Polly, how the roses
Emulate thy damask cheek;
How the bud its sweets discloses—
Buds thy opening bloom bespeak.

Lilies are by plain direction.
Emblems of a double kind:
Emblems of thy fair complexion,
Emblems of thy fairer mind.

But, dear girl, both flowers and beauty
Blossom, fade, and die away;
Then pursue good sense and duty,
Evergreens, which ne'er decay.
NATHANIEL COTTON

THE PICTURE OF LITTLE T. C. IN A PROSPECT OF FLOWERS

CEE with what simplicity This nymph begins her golden days! In the green grass she loves to lie, And there with her fair aspect tames The wilder flowers, and gives them names, But only with the roses plays, And them does tell

What colours best become them, and what smell.

Who can foretell for what high cause This darling of the gods was born? Yet this is she whose chaster laws The wanton Love shall one day fear, And, under her command severe, See his bow broke, and ensigns torn. Happy who can

Appease this virtuous enemy of man!

O then let me in time compound And parley with those conquering eyes, Ere they have tried their force to wound, Ere with their glancing wheels they drive In triumph over hearts that strive, And them that yield but more despise: Let me be laid,

Where I may see the glories from some shade.

Meantime, whilst every verdant thing Itself does at thy beauty charm, Reform the errors of the Spring; Make that the tulips may have share Of sweetness, seeing they are fair,

HERE AND THERE

And roses of their thorns disarm;
But most procure
That violets may a longer age endure.

But O, young beauty of the woods,
Whom Nature courts with fruit and flowers,
Gather the flowers, but spare the buds;
Lest Flora, angry at thy crime
To kill her infants in their prime,
Should quickly make th' example yours;
And ere we see—

Nip in the blossom—all our hopes and thee.

Andrew Marvell

THE SCHOOLBOY

LOVE to rise on a summer morn,
When birds are singing on every tree;
The distant huntsman winds his horn,
And the skylark sings with me;
Oh what sweet company!

But to go to school in a summer morn—Oh, it drives all joy away!
Under a cruel eye outworn,
The little ones spend the day
In sighing and dismay.

Ah, then at times I drooping sit,
And spend many an anxious hour;
Nor in my book can I take delight,
Nor sit in learning's bower,
Worn through with the dreary shower.

How can the bird that is born for joy Sit in a cage and sing? How can a child, when fears annoy, But droop his tender wing, And forget his youthful spring?

Ah, father and mother, if buds are nipped, And blossoms blown away; And if the tender plants are stripped Of their joy in the springing day, By sorrow and care's dismay—

How shall the summer arise in joy,
Or the summer fruits appear?
Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy,
Or bless the mellowing year,
When the blasts of winter appear?

WILLIAM BLAKE

HOLY THURSDAY (THE FOUNDLINGS)

'TWAS on an Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,

Came children walking two and two, in red, and blue, and green:

Grey-headed beadles walked before, with wands as white as snow,

Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames waters flow.

Oh what a multitude they seemed, these flowers of London town!

Seated in companies they sit, with radiance all their own. The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of lambs.

Thousands of little boys and girls raising their innocent hands.

120

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song,

Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven

among:

Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the

Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your

door.

WILLIAM BLAKE

121

THE SISTER

BEHOLD, within the leafy shade
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleam'd like a vision of delight.
I started—seeming to espy
The home and shelter'd bed,
The sparrow's dwelling, which hard by
My father's house in wet or dry
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;
Dreading, though wishing, to be near it;
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy;
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
And humble cares, and delicate fears,
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,
And love, and thought, and joy.
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

WE ARE SEVEN

A SIMPLE child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage girl: She was eight years old, she said; Her hair was thick with many a curl That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air, And she was wildly clad; Her eyes were fair, and very fair; —Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid, How many may you be?" "How many? Seven in all," she said, And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell." She answered, "Seven are we; And two of us at Conway dwell, And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the churchyard lie, My sister and my brother; And, in the churchyard cottage, I Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell, And two are gone to sea, Yet ye are seven! I pray you tell, Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little maid reply— "Seven boys and girls are we; Two of us in the churchyard lie, Beneath the churchyard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid, Your limbs they are alive, If two are in the churchyard laid, Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more, from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit, My kerchief there I hem; And there upon the ground I sit, And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, sir, When it is light and fair, I take my little porringer, And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane; In bed she moaning lay, Till God released her from her pain; And then she went away.

"So in the churchyard she was laid; And, when the grass was dry, Together round her grave we played, My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow, And I could run and slide, My brother John was forced to go, And he lies by her side."

"How many are you then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

TO H. C. (SIX YEARS OLD)

THOU whose fancies from afar are brought,
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
Thou faery voyager, that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
O blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest, Lord of thy house and hospitality; And Grief, uneasy lover! never rest But when she sate within the touch of thee. O too industrious folly! O vain, O causeless melancholy! Nature will either end thee quite, Or lengthening out thy season of delight, Preserve for thee, by individual right, A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks. What hast thou to do with sorrow, Or the injuries of to-morrow?

Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth, Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

A BOY'S SONG

WHERE the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep,
Up the river and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest, Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest, Where the nestlings chirp and flee, That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest, Where the hay lies thick and greenest, There to track the homeward bee, That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the hazel bank is steepest, Where the shadow falls the deepest Where the clustering nuts fall free, That's the way for Billy and me.

Why the boys should drive away Little sweet maidens from the play, Or love to banter and fight so well, That's the thing I never could tell.

But this I know, I love to play Through the meadows, among the hay; Up the water and over the lea, That's the way for Billy and me.

JAMES HOGG

ROSINA

R OSINA ran down Prior Park,
Joyous and buoyant as a lark,
The little girl, light-heel'd, light-hearted,
Challenged me; and away we started.
Soon in a flutter she return'd,
And cheek, and brow, and bosom burn'd.
She fairly owns my full success
In catching her—she could no less,
And said to her mamma, who smiled
Yet lovelier on her lovely child,
"You cannot think how fast he ran
For such a very old, old man!

He wouldn't kiss me when he might,
And, catching me, he had a right;
Such modesty I never knew—
He would no more kiss me than you!"
WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

A PARENTAL ODE TO MY SON (AGED THREE YEARS AND FIVE MONTHS)

↑HOU happy, happy elf! (But stop,—first let me kiss away that tear)— Thou tiny image of myself! (My love, he's poking peas into his ear !) Thou merry laughing sprite! With spirits feather-light, Untouch'd by sorrow, and unsoil'd by sin-(Good heavens! the child is swallowing a pin!) Thou little trickey Puck! With antic toys so funnily bestuck, Light as the singing bird that wings the air— (The door! the door! he'll tumble down the stair!) Thou darling of thy sire! (Why, Janet, he'll set his pinafore a-fire!) Thou imp of mirth and joy! In love's dear chain so strong and bright a link, Thou idol of thy parents—(Drat the boy! There goes my ink!)

Thou cherub—but of earth;
Fit playfellow for Fays, by moonlight pale,
In harmless sport and mirth,
(That dog will bite him if he pulls its tail!)
Thou human humming-bee, extracting honey
From ev'ry blossom in the world that blows,
Singing in Youth's Elysium ever sunny,
(Another tumble!—that's his precious nose!)

Thy father's pride and hope! (He'll break the mirror with that skipping-rope!) With pure heart newly stamp'd from Nature's mint, (Where did he learn that squint?)

The young domestic dove! (He'll have that jug off, with another shove !) Dear nursling of the hymeneal nest! (Are those torn clothes his best?) Little epitome of man! (He'll climb upon the table, that's his plan!) Touched with the beauteous tints of dawning life-(He's got a knife!)

Thou eviable being! No storms, no clouds, in thy blue sky forseeing. Play on, play on, My elfin John! Toss the light ball—bestride the stick— (I knew so many cakes would make him sick!) With fancies, buoyant as the thistle-down, Promoting the face grotesque, and antic brisk, With many a lamb-like frisk, (He's got the scissors, snipping at your gown!) Thou pretty opening rose! (Go to your mother, child, and wipe your nose!) Balmy and breathing music like the south, (He really brings my heart into my mouth!) Fresh as the morn, and brilliant as its star,— (I wish that window had an iron bar!) Bold as the hawk, yet gentle as the dove, (I tell you what, my love,

I cannot write unless he's sent above!)

 ${f T}$ номая Ноор

TO J. H. (FOUR YEARS OLD)

NE cannot turn a minute, But mischief—there you're in it, A-getting at my books, John, With mighty bustling looks, John; Or poking at the roses In midst of which your nose is; Or climbing on a table, No matter how unstable, And turning up your quaint eye And half-shut teeth with "Mayn't I?" Or else you're off at play, John, Just as you'd be all day, John, With hat or not, as happens, And there you dance and clap hands, Or on the grass go rolling, Or plucking flowers or bowling, And getting me expenses With losing balls o'er fences; -But see, the sun shines brightly; Come put your hat on rightly, And we'll among the bushes, And hear your friends, the thrushes, And see what flowers the weather Has rendered fit to gather; And, when we home must jog, you Shall ride my back, you rogue, you. Your hat adorned with fir-leaves, Horse-chestnut, oak, and vine-leaves: And so, with green o'er-head, John, Shall whistle home to bed, John.

LEIGH HUNT

THE WONDERFU' WEAN

OUR wean's the most wonderfu' wean e'er I saw,
It would tak me a lang summer day to tell a'
His pranks, frae the morning, till night shuts his e'e,
When he sleeps like a peerie, 'tween father and me,
For in his quiet turns, siccan questions he'll spier:—
How the moon can stick up in the sky that's sae clear?
What gars the wind blaw? and whar frae comes the
rain?

He's a perfect divert-he's a wonderfu' wean.

Or wha was the first bodie's father? and wha Made the very first snaw-shower that ever did fa'? And wha made the first bird that sang on a tree? And the water that sooms a' the ships in the sea?—But after I've told him as weel as I ken, Again he begins wi' his wha? and his when? And he looks aye sae watchfu' the while I explain—He's as auld as the hills—he's an auld-farrant wean.

And folk who hae skill o' the bumps on the head, Hint there's mae ways than toiling o' winning ane's bread:

How he'll be a rich man, and hae men to work for him, Wi' a kyte like a bailie's, shug shugging afore him; Wi' a face like the moon, sober, sonsy, and douce, And a back, for its breadth, like the side o' a house. 'Tweel I'm unco' ta'en up wi't, they make a' sae plain; He's just a town's talk—he's a by-ord'nar wean.

One'er can forget sic a laugh as I gat, To see him put on father's waistcoat and hat; Then the lang-leggit boots gaed sae far ower his knees, The tap loops wi' his fingers he grippit wi' ease,

Then he march'd thro' the house—he march'd but, he march'd ben,
Like ower many mae o' our great-little men,
That I leuch clean outright, for I couldna contain,
He was sic a conceit—sic an ancient-like wean.

But 'mid a' his daffin', sic kindness he shows,
That he's dear to my heart as the dew to the rose;
And the unclouded hinnie-beam aye in his e'e
Mak's him every day dearer and dearer to me.
Though fortune be saucy, and dorty, and dour,
And gloom through her fingers, like hills through a shower,

When bodies hae got a bit bairn o' their ain, How he cheers up their hearts—he's the wonderful wean!

WILLIAM MILLER

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupation,
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me The patter of little feet, The sound of a door that is opened, And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight, Descending the broad hall stair, Grave Alice and laughing Allegra, And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper and then a silence; Yet I know by their merry eyes They are plotting and planning together To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway, A sudden raid from the hall! By three doors left unguarded They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti, Because you have scaled the wall, Such an old moustache as I am Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you for ever.
Yes, for ever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away!
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

IN SCHOOL-DAYS

STILL sits the school-house by the road, A ragged beggar sunning; Around it still the sumachs grow, And blackberry vines are running.

Within the master's desk is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The jack-knife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;
Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing.

Long years ago a winter sun Shone over it at setting; Lit up its western window-panes, And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls, And brown eyes full of grieving, Of one who still her steps delayed When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favour singled;
His cap pulled low upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow To right and left, he lingered;— As restlessly her tiny hands The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt The soft hand's light caressing, And heard the tremble of her voice, As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:
I hate to go above you,
Because,"—the brown eyes lower fell,—
"Because, you see, I love you!"

Still memory to a grey-haired man That sweet child-face is showing. Dear girl! the grasses on her grave Have forty years been growing!

He lives to learn in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her,—because they love him.
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

RED RIDING-HOOD

ON the wide lawn the snow lay deep Ridged o'er with many a drifted heap; The wind that through the pine-trees sung, The naked elm-boughs tossed and swung; While, through the window, frosty-starred Against the sunset-purple barred, We saw the sombre crow flap by, The Hawk's grey fleck along the sky, The crested blue-jay flitting swift, The squirrel poising on the drift, Erect, alert, his broad grey tail Set to the north wind like a sail.

It came to pass, one little lass
With flattened face against the glass,
And eyes in which the tender dew
Of pity shone, stood gazing through
The narrow space her rosy lips
Had melted from the frost's eclipse;
"O, see," she cried, "the poor blue-jays!
What is it that the black crow says?
The squirrel lifts his little legs
Because he has no hands, and begs;
He's asking for my nuts, I know:
May I not feed them on the snow?"

Half lost within her boots, her head Warm-sheltered in her hood of red, Her plaid skirt close about her drawn, She floundered down the wintry lawn: Now struggling through the misty vale. Blown round her by the shrieking gale; Now sinking in a drift so low, Her scarlet hood could scarcely show Its dash of colour on the snow.

She dropped for bird and beast forlorn Her little store of nuts and corn, And thus her timid guests bespoke;—
"Come, squirrel, from your hollow oak—Come, black old crow—come poor blue-jay, Before your supper's blown away!
Don't be afraid, we all are good;
And I'm mamma's Red Riding-Hood!"

O Thou whose care is over all, Who heedest even the sparrow's fall, Keep in the little maiden's breast. The pity which is now its guest!

Let not her cultured years make less
The childhood charm of tenderness,
But let her feel as well as know,
Nor harder with her polish grow!
Unmoved by sentimental grief
That wails along some printed leaf,
But prompt with kindly word and deed
To own the claims of all who need;
Let the grown woman's self make good
The promise of Red Riding-Hood!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

THE BAREFOOT BOY

The LESSINGS on thee, little man, Barefoot boy, with cheeks of tan! With thy turned-up pantaloons And thy merry whistled tunes; With thy red lip, redder still Kissed by strawberries on the hill; With the sunshine on thy face Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace; From my heart I give thee joy,— I was once a barefoot boy! Prince thou art—the grown-up man Only is Republican. Let the million-dollared ride! Barefoot, trudging at his side, Thou hast more than he can buy In the reach of ear and eye— Outward sunshine, inward joy, Blessings on the barefoot boy!

O for boyhood's painless play, Sleep that wakes in laughing day,

Health that mocks the doctor's rules Knowledge never learned of schools, Of the wild bee's morning chase, Of the wild flowers' time and place, Flight of fowl and habitude Of the tenants of the wood; How the tortoise bears his shell: How the woodchuck digs his cell. And the ground mole sinks his well; How the robin feeds her young, How the oriole's nest is hung; Where the whitest lilies blow, Where the freshest berries grow, Where the ground nut trails its vine, Where the wood grape's clusters shine; Of the black wasp's cunning way, Mason of his walls of clay, And the architectural plans Of grey hornet artisans !-For, eschewing books and tasks, Nature answers all he asks; Hand in hand with her he walks, Face to face with her he talks. Part and parcel of her joy— Blessings on the barefoot boy!

O for boyhood's time of June, Crowding years in one brief moon, When all things I heard or saw, Me, their master, waited for. I was rich in flowers and trees, Humming-birds and honey-bees; For my sport the squirrel played, Plied the snouted mole his spade; For my taste the blackberry cone Purpled over hedge and stone;

Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night;
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickeril pond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too,
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

O for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread—
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door stone, grey and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wide-swung fold;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frog's orchestra
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch: pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man, Live and laugh, as boyhood can! Though the flinty slopes be hard, Stubble-speared the new-mown sward, Every morn shall lead thee through Fresh baptisms of the dew;

Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat,
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil;
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

A SONG FOR THE RAGGED SCHOOLS OF LONDON

AM listening here in Rome.
"England's strong," say many speakers,
"If she winks, the Czar must come,
Prow and topsail, to the breakers."

"England's rich in coal and oak,"
Adds a Roman, getting moody,
"If she shakes a travelling cloak,
Down our Appian roll the scudi."

"England's righteous," they rejoin,
"Who shall grudge her exaltations,
When her wealth of golden coin
Works the welfare of the nations?"

I am listening here in Rome.

Over Alps a voice is sweeping—

"England's cruel! save us some

Of these victims in her keeping!"

As the cry beneath the wheel
Of an old triumphal Roman
Cleft the people's shouts like steel,
While the show was spoilt for no man,

Comes that voice. Let others shout,
Other poets praise my land here:
I am sadly sitting out,
Praying "God forgive her grandeur."

Shall we boast of empire, where Time with ruin sits commissioned? In God's liberal blue air Peter's dome itself looks wizened;

And the mountains, in disdain, Gather back their lights of opal From the dumb, despondent plain, Heaped with jawbones of a people.

Lordly English, think it o'er, Cæsar's doing is all undone! You have cannons on your shore, And free parliaments in London,

Princes' parks, and merchants' homes,
Tents for soldiers, ships for seamen,—
Ay, but ruins worse than Rome's
In your pauper men and women.

Women leering through the gas
(Just such bosoms used to nurse you).
Men, turned wolves by famine—pass!
Those can speak themselves, and curse you.

But these others—children small, Spilt like blots about the city, Quay, and street, and palace-wall— Take them up into your pity!

Ragged children with bare feet,
Whom the angels in white raiment
Know the names of, to repeat
When they come on you for payment.

Ragged children, hungry-eyed,
Huddled up out of the coldness
On your doorsteps, side by side,
Till your footman damns their boldness.

In the alleys, in the squares,
Begging, lying little rebels
In the noisy thoroughfares,
Struggling on with piteous trebles.

Patient children—think what pain
Makes a young child patient—ponder!
Wronged too commonly to strain
After right, or wish, or wonder.

Wicked children, with peaked chins, And old foreheads! there are many With no pleasures except sins, Gambling with a stolen penny.

Sickly children, that whine low
To themselves and not their mothers,
From mere habit,—never so
Hoping help or care from others.

Healthy children, with those blue English eyes, fresh from their Maker, Fierce and ravenous, staring through At the brown loaves of the baker.

I am listening here in Rome,
And the Romans are confessing,
"English children pass in bloom
All the prettiest made for blessing.

"Angli angeli!" (resumed
From the mediæval story)
"Such rose angelhoods, emplumed
In such ringlets of pure glory!"

Can we smooth down the bright hair,
O my sisters, calm, unthrilled in
Our hearts' pulses? Can we bear
The sweet looks of our own children,

While those others, lean and small, Scurf and mildew of the city, Spot our streets, convict us all Till we take them into pity?

"Is it our fault?" you reply,
"When, throughout civilization,
Every nation's empery
Is asserted by starvation?

"All these mouths we cannot feed,
And we cannot clothe these bodies."
Well, if man's so hard indeed,
Let them learn at least what God is!

Little outcasts from life's fold,
The grave's hope they may be joined in,
By Christ's covenant consoled
For our social contract's grinding.

If no better can be done,
Let us do but this,—endeavour
That the sun behind the sun
Shine upon them while they shiver!

On the dismal London flags,
Through the cruel social juggle,
Put a thought beneath their rags
To ennoble the heart's struggle.

O my sisters! not so much
Are we asked for—not a blossom
From our children's nosegay, such
As we gave it from our bosom,—

Not the milk left in their cup,
Not the lamp while they are sleeping.
Not the little cloak hung up
While the coat's in daily keeping

But a place in RAGGED SCHOOLS,
Where the outcasts may to-morrow
Learn by gentle words and rules
Just the uses of their sorrow.

O my sisters! children small,
Blue-eyed, wailing through the city—
Our own babes cry in them all,
Let us take them into pity!
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

MY CHILD

MY child, we were two children, Small, merry by childhood's law We used to crawl to the hen-house, And hide ourselves in the straw.

We crowed like cocks, and whenever The pursuers near us drew—
Cock-a-doodle! they thought
'Twas a real cock that crew.

The boxes about our courtyard We carpeted to our mind, And lived there both together—Kept house in a noble kind.

The neighbour's old cat often Came to pay us a visit; We made her a bow and curtsey, Each with a compliment in it.

After her health we asked, Our care and regard to evince— (We have made the very same speeches To many an old cat since).

We also sate and wisely Discoursed, as old folks do, Complaining how all went better In those good times we knew—

How love, and truth, and believing, Had left the world to itself, And how so dear was the coffee, And how so scarce was the pelf.

The children's games are over,
The rest is over with youth—
The world, the good games, the good times,
The belief, and the love, and the truth.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST

'Mid the beeches of a meadow
By a stream-side on the grass,
And the trees are showering down
Doubles of their leaves in shadow
On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by,
And her feet she has been dipping
In the shallow water's flow:
Now she holds them nakedly
In her hands, all sleek and dripping,
While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone,
And the smile she softly uses
Fills the silence like a speech
While she thinks what shall be done,
And the sweetest pleasure chooses
For her future within reach.

K

Little Ellie in her smile
Chooses—"I will have a lover,
Riding on a steed of steeds:
He shall love me without guile,
And to him I will discover
The swan's nest among the reeds.

"And the steed shall be red-roan,
And the lover shall be noble,
With an eye that takes the breath:
And the lute he plays upon
Shall strike ladies into trouble,
As his sword strikes men to death.

"And the steed it shall be shod All in silver, housed in azure, And the mane shall swim the wind; And the hoofs along the sod Shall flash onward and keep measure, Till the shepherds look behind.

"But my lover will not prize
All the glory that he rides in,
When he gazes in my face:
He will say, 'O Love, thine eyes
Build the shrine my soul abides in,
And I kneel here tor thy grace!'

"Then, ay, then he shall kneel low, With the red-roan steed anear him Which shall seem to understand, Till I answer, 'Rise and go! For the world must love and fear him Whom I gift with heart and hand.'

"Then he will arise so pale,
I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a yes I must not say,
Nathless maiden-brave, 'Farewell,'
I will utter, and dissemble—
'Light to-morrow with to-day!'

"Then he'll ride among the hills To the wide world past the river, There to put away all wrong; To make straight distorted wills, And to empty the broad quiver Which the wicked bear along.

"Three times shall a young foot-page Swim the stream and climb the mountain And kneel down beside my feet— 'Lo, my master sends this gage, Lady, for thy pity's counting! What wilt thou exchange for it?'

"And the first time, I will send
A white rosebud for a guerdon,
And the second time, a glove;
But the third time—I may bend
From my pride, and answer—'Pardon,
If he comes to take my love.'

"Then the young foot-page will run,
Then my lover will ride faster,
Till he kneeleth at my knee:
'I am a duke's eldest son,
Thousand serfs do call me master,
But, O Love, I love but thee!'

"He will kiss me on the mouth
Then, and lead me as a lover
Through the crowds that praise his deeds:
And, when soul-tied by one troth,
Unto him I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds."

Little Ellie, with her smile

Not yet ended, rose up gaily,

Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe,

And went homeward round a mile,

Just to see, as she did daily,

What more eggs were with the two.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse, Winding up the stream, light-hearted, Where the osier pathway leads, Past the boughs she stoops—and stops. Lo, the wild swan had deserted, And a rat had gnawed the reeds!

Ellie went home sad and slow.

If she found the lover ever,
With his red roan steed of steeds,
Sooth I know not; but I know

She could never show him—never,
That swan's nest among the reeds!

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

A PORTRAIT

I WILL paint her as I see her; Ten times have the lilies blown Since she looked upon the sun.

And her face is lily-clear,
Lily-shaped, and dropped in duty
To the law of its own beauty.

Oval cheeks encoloured faintly, Which a taint of golden hair Keeps from fading off to air.

And a forehead fair and saintly, Which two blue eyes undershine, Like meek prayers before a shrine.

Face and figure of a child,—
Though too calm, you think, and tender,
For the childhood you would lend her.

Yet child—simple, undefiled, Frank, obedient,—waiting still On the turning of your will.

Throwing light, as all your things, As young birds, or early wheat, When the wind blows over it.

Only, free from flutterings
Of loud mirth that scorneth measure—
Taking love for her chief pleasure.

Choosing pleasures, for the rest, Which come softly—just as she When she settles at your knee.

Quiet talk she liketh best, In a bower of gentle looks— Watering flowers, or reading books.

And her voice, it murmurs lowly
As a silver stream may run,
Which yet feels, you feel, the sun.

And her smile it seems half holy,
As if drawn from thoughts more fair
Then our common jestings are.

And if any poet knew her He would sing of her with falls Used in loving madrigals.

And if any painter drew her He would paint her unaware With a halo round the hair.

And if reader read the poem, He would whisper, "You have done a Consecrated little Una."

And a dreamer (did you show him That same picture) would exclaim, "'Tis my angel with a name!"

And a stranger when he sees her In the street even—smileth stilly Just as you would at a lily.

And all voices that address her Soften, sleeker every word, As if speaking to a bird.

And all fancies yearn to cover
The hard earth whereon she passes,
With the thymy scented grasses.

And all hearts do pray "God love her!"— Ay, and always in good sooth, We may all be sure HE DOTH. ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

O ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers, Ere the sorrow comes with years? They are leaning their young heads against their mothers, And that cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows, The young birds are chirping in the nest,

The young fawns are playing with the shadows,

The young flowers are blowing toward the west— But the young, young children, O my brothers,

They are weeping bitterly!

They are weeping in the playtime of the others, In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow Why their tears are falling so?

The old man may weep for his to-morrow Which is lost in Long Ago;

The old tree is leafless in the forest,

The old year is ending in the frost, The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,

The old hope is hardest to be lost:

But the young, young children, O my brothers, Do you ask them why they stand

Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers, In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces, And their looks are sad to see, For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses

Down the cheeks of infancy.

"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;"
"Our young feet," they say, "are very weak!
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children,

For the outside earth is cold,

And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering, And the graves are for the old.

"True," say the children, "it may happen
That we die before our time.
Little Alice died last year—the grave is shapen
Like a snowball in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her;
Was no room for any work in the close clay:
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'"
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries!

Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her

For the smile has time for growing in her eyes!

And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in The shroud, by the kirk-chime!

"It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time."

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking Death in life, as best to have;

They are binding up their hearts away from breaking, With a cerement from the grave.

Go out, children, from the mine and from the city— Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do—

Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty— Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!

But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap;
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For all day we drag our burdens tiring
Through the coal-dark underground,
Or all day we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories round and round.

"For all day the wheels are droning, turning,—
Their wind comes in our faces,—
Till our hearts turn, our head with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places,—
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,—
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,—
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,—
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day the iron wheels are droning;
And sometimes we could pray,

'Oh, ye wheels' (breaking out in a bad moaning),

'Stop! be silent for to-day!'"

Ay, be silent. Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth,—
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth!

Let them feel that this cold metallic motion Is not all the life God fashions or reveals; Let them prove their living souls against the notion That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!

Still, all day the iron wheels go onward, Grinding life down from its mark;

And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward, Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers, To look up to Him and pray;

So the blessed One, who blesseth all the others, Will bless them another day.

They answer, "Who is God that He should hear us, While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?

When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word;

And we hear not (for the wheels in their resounding) Strangers speaking at the door:

Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him, Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of prayer, we remember, And at midnight's hour of harm, 'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,

We say softly for a charm, We know no other words, except 'Our Father,' And we think that, in some pause of angel's song,

God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather, And hold both within His right hand which is strong.

'Our Father,' if he heard us, He would surely (For they call him good and mild)

Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely, 'Come and rest with me, my child.'

"But, no!" say the children, weeping faster,

"He is speechless as a stone!

And they tell us, of His image is the master

Who commands us to work on.

Go to!" say the children,—"up in heaven,

Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.

Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving—

We look up for God, but tears have made us blind."

Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,

O my brothers, what ye preach?

For God's possible is taught by His world's loving—And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you!

They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun;
They know the grief of man, without his wisdom;
They sink in man's despair, without his calm,—
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,—
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—
Are worn as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The blessings of its memory cannot keep,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly!

Let them weep! let them weep!

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in their places,
With eyes turned on Deity;—
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's
heart,—

Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?

Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And its purple shows your path!
But the child's sob curses deeper in the silence
Than the strong man in his wrath!
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

NEIGHBOUR NELLY

I'M in love with neighbour Nelly,
Though I know she's only ten,
While, alas! I'm eight-and-forty,—
And the marriedest of men!
I've a wife who weighs me double,
I've three daughters all with beaux;
I've a son with noble whiskers,
Who at me turns up his nose—

Though a square-toes, and a fogey,
Still I've sunshine in my heart:
Still I'm fond of cakes and marbles,
Can appreciate a tart—
I can love my neighbour Nelly
Just as tho' I were a boy:
I could hand her nuts and apples
From my depths of corduroy.

She is tall, and growing taller,
She is vigorous of limb:
(You should see her play at cricket
With her little brother Jim.)
She has eyes as blue as damsons,
She has pounds of auburn curls,
She regrets the game of leap-frog
Is prohibited to girls.

I adore my neighbour Nelly,
I invite her in to tea:
And I let her nurse the baby—
All her pretty ways to see.
Such a darling bud of woman,
Yet remote from any teens,—
I have learnt from baby Nelly
What the girl's doll instinct means.

Oh! to see her with the baby!

He adores her more than I,—

How she choruses his crowing,—

How she hushes every cry!

How she loves to pit his dimples

With her light forefinger deep,

How she boasts to me in triumph,

When she's got him off to sleep!

We must part, my neighbour Nelly,
For the summers quickly flee;
And your middle-aged admirer
Must supplanted quickly be.
Yet as jealous as a mother,—
A distempered cankered churl,
I look vainly for the setting
To be worthy such a pearl.

ROBERT B.

Robert Brough

GOD'S GIFTS

GOD gave a gift to Earth:—a child, Weak, innocent, and undefiled, Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

It lay so helpless, so forlorn, Earth took it coldly and in scorn, Cursing the day when it was born.

She gave it first a tarnished name, For heritage, a tainted fame, Then cradled it in want and shame.

All influence of Good or Right, All ray of God's most holy light, She curtained closely from its sight.

Then turned her heart, her eyes away, Ready to look again, the day Its little feet began to stray.

In dens of guilt the baby played, Where sin, and sin alone, was made The law that all around obeyed.

With ready and obedient care He learnt the tasks they taught him there; Black sin for lesson—oaths for prayer.

The earth arose, and, in her might, To vindicate her injured right, Thrust him in deeper depths of night.

Branding him with a deeper brand Of shame, he could not understand, The felon outcast of the land.

God gave a gift to Earth:—a child, Weak, innocent, and undefiled, Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

And Earth received the gift, and cried Her joy and triumph far and wide, Till echo answered to her pride.

She blest the hour when first he came To take the crown of pride and fame, Wreathed through long ages for his name;

Then bent her utmost art and skill To train the supple mind and will, And guard it from a breath of ill.

She strewed his morning path with flowers, And Love, in tender drooping showers, Nourished the blue and dawning hours.

She shed, in rainbow hues of light, A halo round the Good and Right, To tempt and charm the baby's sight.

And every step, of work or play, Was lit by some such dazzling ray, Till morning brightened into day.

And then the World arose, and said— Let added honours now be shed On such a noble heart and head!

O World, both gifts were pure and bright, Holy and sacred in God's sight:— God will judge them and thee aright!

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTOR

CHILDREN'S THANKFULNESS

WHY so stately, maiden fair,
Rising in thy nurse's arms
With that condescending air;
Gathering up thy queenly charms
Like some gorgeous Indian bird,
Which, when at eve the balmy copse is stirred,

Turns the glowing neck to chide
Th' irreverent footfall, then makes haste to hide
Again its lustre deep
Under the purple wing, best home of downy sleep?

Not as yet she comprehends

How the tongues of men reprove;
But a spirit o'er her bends,

Trained in heaven to courteous love,
And with wondering grave rebuke
Tempers, to-day, shy tone and bashful look.
Graceless one, 'tis all of thee,
Who for maiden bounty, full and free,
The violet from her gay
And guileless bosom, didst no word of thanks repay.

Therefore, lo! she opens wide
Both her blue and wistful eyes,—
Breathes her grateful chant, to chide
Our too tardy sympathies.
Little babes and angels bright—
They muse, be sure, and wonder day and night,
How th' all-holy Hand should give,
The sinner's hand in thanklessness receive.
We see it and we hear,
But wonder not; for why? we feel it all too near.

Not in vain, when feasts are spread,
To the youngest at the board
Call we to incline the head,
And pronounce the solemn word.
Not in vain they clasp and raise
The soft pure fingers in unconscious praise;
Taught, perchance, by pictured wall
How little ones before the Lord may fall;
How to His loved caress
Reach out the restless arm, and near and nearer press.

Children in their joyous ranks,
As you pace the village street,
Fill the air with smiles and thanks
If but once one babe you greet.
Never weary, never dim,
From thrones seraphic mouths th' eternal hymn.
Babes and angels grudge no praise;
But elder souls, to whom His saving ways
Are open, fearless take
Their portion, hear the grace, and no meek answer make.

TO A VERY YOUNG LADY

O GAY little girl with the merry brown eyes,

Looking over my sheet as I scribble this
twaddle,

Suppose I attempt just to make a surmise
In regard to the thoughts of your giddy young noddle.

Theology—politics—science? Pooh, pooh!

Learn them for some twenty years after your bridal.

Young ladies of eight are a bore if they're blue:

"The Whole Duty of Girls" to be happy and idle.

You don't care a pin about Louis the Knave, What schemes he is planning, what quarrel he'll fish up:

You care just as little though John Bright may rave, Or Palmerston make an unorthodox Bishop.

To you a ridiculous sight it would seem
If Tory and Radical came to a tussle:

You approve of ripe strawberries smothered in cream, But not of Reform and its hero, John Russell.

161

JOHN KEBLE

What cares my young heroine, singing her tune,
And considering Wednesday a thoroughly jolly day,
For June has consented at last to be June,
With blue sky and dry grass and Papa making holiday.
MORTIMER COLLINS

A CHILD'S SMILE

A CHILD'S smile—nothing more; Quiet, and soft, and grave and seldom seen; Like summer lightning o'er, Leaving the little face again serene.

I think, boy well beloved,

Thine angel, who did grieve to see how far
Thy childhood is removed
From sports that dear to other children are,

On this pale cheek has thrown
The brightness of his countenance, and made
A beauty like his own—
That while we see it, we are half afraid

And marvel, will it stay?

Or, long ere manhood, will that angel fair,

Departing, some sad day

Steal the child-smile and leave the shadow care?

Nay, fear not. As is given
Unto this child the father watching o'er,
His angel up in heaven
Beholds our Father's face for evermore.
162

And he will help him bear
His burden, as his father helps him now;
So may he come to wear
That happy child-smile on an old man's brow.
DINAH MULOCK CRAIK

MONSIEUR ET MADEMOISELLE

DEUX petits enfants Français:
Monsieur et Mademoiselle.
Of what can they be talking, child?
Indeed I cannot tell.
But of this I am very certain,
You would find nought to blame
In that sweet French politeness—
I wish we had the same!

Monsieur has got a melon,
And scoops it with his knife,
While Mademoiselle sits watching him:
No rudeness here—or strife:
Though could you only listen,
They're chattering like two pies—
French magpies, understand me—
So merry and so wise.

Their floor is bare of carpet,
Their curtains are so thin;
They dine off meagre potage, and
Put many an onion in!
Her snow-white caps she irons
He blacks his shoes, he can;
Yet she's a little lady,
And he a gentleman.

O busy, happy children,
That light French heart of yours,
Would it might sometimes enter at
Our solemn English doors!
Would that we worked as gaily,
And played, yes, played as well,
And lived our lives as simply
As Monsieur and Mademoiselle.
DINAH MULOCK CRAIK

TO ALICE* (FROM "ALICE IN WONDERLAND")

A LL in the golden afternoon
Full leisurely we glide;
For both our oars, with little skill,
By little arms are plied,
While little hands make vain pretence
Our wanderings to guide.

Ah, cruel Three! In such an hour,
Beneath such dreamy weather,
To beg a tale of breath too weak
To stir the tiniest feather!
Yet what can one poor voice avail
Against three tongues together?

Imperious Prima flashes forth
Her edict "to begin it"—
In gentler tone Secunda hopes
"There will be nonsense in it!"—
While Tertia interrupts the tale
Not more than once a minute.

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Anon, to sudden silence won,
In fancy they pursue
The dream-child moving through a land
Of wonders wild and new,
In friendly chat with bird or beast—
And half believe it true.

And ever, as the story drained
The wells of fancy dry,
And faintly strove that weary one
To put the subject by,
"The rest next time—" "It is next time!"
The happy voices cry.

Thus grew the tale of Wonderland:
Thus slowly, one by one,
Its quaint events were hammered out—
And now the tale is done,
And home we steer, a merry crew,
Beneath the setting sun.

Alice! a childish story take,
And with a gentle hand
Lay it where Childhood's dreams are twined
In Memory's mystic band,
Like pilgrim's wither'd wreath of flowers
Pluck'd in a far-off land.

Lewis Carroll

TO ALICE* (FROM "THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS")

CHILD of the pure unclouded brow And dreaming eyes of wonder! Though time be fleet, and I and thou Are half a life asunder, Thy loving smile will surely hail The love-gift of a fairy-tale.

I have not seen thy sunny face, Nor heard thy silver laughter; No thought of me shall find a place In thy young life's hereafter— Enough that now thou wilt not fail To listen to my fairy-tale.

A tale begun in other days, When summer suns were glowing-A simple chime, that served to time The rhythm of our rowing— Whose echoes live in memory yet, Though envious years would say "forget.'

Come, hearken then, ere voice of dread, With bitter tidings laden, Shall summon to unwelcome bed A melancholy maiden! We are but older children, dear, Who fret to find our bedtime near.

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Without, the frost, the blinding snow,
The storm-wind's moody madness—
Within, the firelight's ruddy glow
And childhood's nest of gladness.
The magic words shall hold thee fast:
Thou shalt not heed the raving blast.

And though the shadow of a sigh
May tremble through the story,
For "happy summer days" gone by,
And vanish'd summer glory—
It shall not touch with breath of bale
The pleasance of our fairy-tale.

Lewis Carroll

LEWIS CARROLL

FAREWELL VERSES* ("ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS")

A BOAT, beneath a sunny sky
Lingering onward dreamily
In an evening of July—

Children three that nestle near, Eager eye and willing ear, Pleased a simple tale to hear—

Long has paled that sunny sky: Echoes fade and memories die: Autumn frosts have slain July.

Still she haunts me, phantomwise, Alice moving under skies Never seen by waking eyes.

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Children yet, the tale to hear, Eager eye and willing ear, Lovingly shall nestle near.

In a Wonderland they lie, Dreaming as the days go by, Dreaming as the summers die!

Ever drifting down the stream— Lingering in the golden gleam— Life, what is it but a dream?

LEWIS CARROLL

LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE*

LITTLE Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,

An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' bresh the crumbs

away,

An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an' sweep,

An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her

board-an'-keep;

An' all us other childern, when the supper-things is done We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about, An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you

Ef you

Don't Watch

Out!

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Onc't they was a little boy wouldn't say his prayers— So when he went to bed at night, away up stairs,

His Mammy heerd him holler, an' his Daddy heerd him bawl.

An' when they turn't the kivvers down, he wasn't there at all!

An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an' press,

An' seeked him up the chimbly-flue, an' ever'wheres, I

guess;

But all they ever found was thist his pants an' roundabout!

An' the Gobble-uns'll git you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,

An' make fun of ever'one, an' all her blood-an'-kin;

An' onc't when they was "company," an' ole folks was there,

She mocked 'em and shocked 'em, an' said she didn't

An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide,

They was two great big Black Things a-standin' by her side,

An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed what she's about!

An' the Gobble-uns'll git you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says when the blaze is blue, An' the lampwick sputters, an' the wind goes woo-oo! An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray, An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched away,— You better mind yer parunts, and yer teachers fond and dear,

An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's

tear,

An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about, Er the Gobble-uns'll git you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out!
James Whitcome Riley

LITTLE BREECHES

I DON'T go much on religion,
I never ain't had no show;
But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,
On the handful o' things I know.
I don't pan out on the prophets
And free-will and that sort o' thing—
But I b'lieve in God and the angels,
Ever sence one night last Spring.

I come into town with some turnips,
And my little Gabe come along—
No four-year-old in the county
Could beat him for pretty and strong—
Peart and chipper and sassy,
Always ready to swear and fight—
And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker
Jest to keep his milk-teeth white.
170

The snow come down like a blanket
As I passed by Taggart's store;
I went in for a jug of molasses
And left the team at the door.
They scared at something and started—
I heard one little squall,
And hell-to-split over the prairie!
Went team, Little Breeches, and all.

Hell-to-split over the prairie!

I was almost froze with skeer;
But we rousted up some torches,
And sarched for 'em far and near.
At last we struck hosses and waggon,
Snowed under a soft white mound,
Upsot, dead beat, but of little Gabe
No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me
Of my fellow-critter's aid;
I jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,
Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

By this, the torches was played out, And me and Isrul Parr Went off for some wood to a sheepfold That he said was somewhar thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed
Where they shut up the lambs at night;
We looked in and seen them huddled thar,
So warm and sleepy and white;
And thar sot Little Breeches and chirped,
As peart as ever you see,
"I want a chaw of terbacker,
And that's what's the matter of me."

How did he git than? Angels.

He could never have walked in that storm:
They jest scooped down and toted him
To whar it was safe and warm.
And I think that saving a little child,
And fotching him to his own,
Is a derned sight better business
Than loafing around the Throne.

JOHN HAY

THE ORCHARD AND THE HEATH

A troop of children through an orchard gate:
The boughs hung low, the grass was high;
They had but to lift hands or wait
For fruits to fill them; fruits were all their sky.

They shouted, running on from tree to tree, And played the game the wind plays, on and round. 'Twas visible invisible glee Pursuing; and a fountain's sound Of laughter spouted, pattering fresh on me.

I could have watched them till the daylight fled, Their pretty bower made such a light of day. A small one tumbling sang, "Oh, head!" The rest to comfort her straightway Siezed on a branch and thumped down apples red.

The tiny creature flashing through green grass, And laughing with her feet and eyes among Fresh apples, while a little lass Over as o'er breeze-ripples hung; That sight I saw, and passed as aliens pass.

My footpath left the pleasant farms and lanes,
Soft cottage-smoke, straight cocks a-crow, gay flowers;
Beyond the wheel-ruts of the wains,
Across a heath I walked for hours,
And met its rival tenants, rays and rains.

Still in my view mile-distant firs appeared,
When, under a patched channel-bank enriched
With foxglove whose late bells drooped seared,
Behold, a family had pitched
Their camp, and labouring the low tent upreared.

Here, too, were many children, quick to scan
A new thing coming; swarthy cheeks, white teeth:
In many-coloured rags they ran,
Like iron runlets of the heath.
Dispersed lay broth-pot, sticks, and drinking-can.

Three girls with shoulders like a boat at sea
Tipped sideways by the wave (their clothing slid
From either ridge unequally),
Lean, swift and voluble, bestrid
A starting-point, unfrocked to the bent knee.

They raced; their brothers yelled them on, and broke In act to follow, but as one they snuffed Wood-fumes, and by the fire that spoke Of provender, its pale flame puffed, And rolled athwart dwarf furzes grey-blue smoke.

Soon on the dark edge of a ruddier gleam,
The mother-pot perusing, all, stretched flat,
Paused for its bubbling-up supreme:
A dog upright in circle sat,
And oft his nose went with the flying steam.

I turned and looked on heaven awhile, where now The moor-faced sunset broaden'd with red light; Threw high aloft a golden bough,

And seemed the desert of the night

Far down with mellow orchards to endow.

George Meredith

BIRTHDAY TALK FOR A CHILD (IRIS)

DADDY dear, I'm only four And I'd rather not be more: Four's the nicest age to be— Two and two, or one and three.

All I love is two and two, Mother, Fabian, Paul and you; All you love is one and three, Mother, Fabian, Paul and me.

Give your little girl a kiss Because she learned and told you this.

E. NESBIT

LITTLE BLUE RIBBONS

"LITTLE Blue Ribbons"; we call her that
From the ribbons she wears in her favourite hat;
For may not a person be only five,
And yet have the neatest of taste alive?
As a matter of fact, this one has views
Of the strictest sort as to frocks and shoes;
And we never object to a sash or a bow,
When Little Blue Ribbons prefers it so.

Little Blue Ribbons has eyes of blue,
And an arch little mouth, which the teeth peep through;
And her primitive look is wise and grave
With a sense of the weight of the word "behave";
Though now and again she may condescend
To a radiant smile for a private friend;
But to smile for ever is weak, you know,
And Little Blue Ribbons regards it so.

She's a staid little woman! And so as well Is her ladyship's doll, Miss Bonnibelle; But I think what at present the most takes up The thoughts of her heart is her last new cup; For the object thereon, be it understood, Is "The Robins that buried the Babes in the Wood." It is not in the least like a robin though, But Little Blue Ribbons declares it so.

Little Blue Ribbons believes, I think,
That the rain comes down for the birds to drink;
Moreover, she holds, in a cab you'd get
To the spot where the suns of yesterday set;
And I know that she fully expects to meet
With a lion or wolf in Regent Street!
We may smile and deny as we like—But no,
For Little Blue Ribbons believes it so!

Dear Little Blue Ribbons! She tells us all That she never intends to be great and tall; (For how could she ever contrive to sit In her own, own chair, if she grew one bit?) And, further, she says, she intends to stay In her darling home till she gets quite gray; Alas, we are gray; and we doubt, you know, But Little Blue Ribbons will have it so!

Austin Dobson

TO MY DAUGHTER

THOU hast the colours of the Spring,
The gold of king-cups triumphing,
The blue of wood-bells wild;
But winter-thoughts thy spirit fill,
And thou art wandering from us still,
Too young to be our child.

Yet have thy fleeting smiles confessed,
Thou dear and much-desired guest,
That home is near at last;
Long lost in high mysterious lands,
Close by our door thy spirit stands,
Its journey well-nigh past.

Oh sweet bewildered soul, I watch
The fountains of thine eyes, to catch
New fancies bubbling there,
To feel our common light, and lose
The flush of strange ethereal hues
Too dim for us to share;

Fade, cold immortal lights, and make This creature human for my sake,
Since I am nought but clay;
An angel is too fine a thing
To sit beside my chair and sing,
And cheer my passing day.

I smile, who could not smile, unless The air of rapt unconsciousness Passed, with the fading hours; I joy in every childish sign That proves the stranger less divine And much more meekly ours.

I smile, as one by night who sees,
Through mist of newly-budded trees,
The clear Orion set,
And knows that soon the dawn will fly
In fire across the riven sky,
And gild the woodlands wet.

EDMUND GOSSE

AD DOROTHEAM

[Mr. Gladsbone—to whom the following verses have frequently been attributed—is supposed to be addressing his little grand-daughter, Miss Dorothy Drew.]

I KNOW where there is honey in a jar,
Meet for a certain little friend of mine;
And Dorothy, I know where daisies are
That only wait small hands to intertwine
A wreath for such a golden head as thine.

The thought that thou art coming makes all glad;
The house is bright with blossoms high and low,
And many a little lass and little lad
Expectantly are running to and fro;
The fire within our hearts is all aglow.

We want thee, child, to share in our delight
On this high day, the holiest and best.
Because 'twas then ere youth had taken flight,
Thy grandmamma, of women loveliest,
Made me of men most honoured and most blest.

That naughty boy that led thee to suppose
He was thy sweetheart, has, I grieve to tell,
Been seen to pick the garden's choicest rose
And toddle with it to another belle,
Who does not treat him altogether well.

177

But mind not that, or let it teach thee this—
To waste no love on any youthful rover:
(All youths are rovers, I assure thee, miss.)
No, if thou wouldst true constancy discover—
Thy grandpapa is perfect as a lover.

So come, thou playmate of my closing day,
The latest treasure life can offer me,
And with thy baby laughter make us gay.
Thy fresh young voice shall sing, my Dorothy,
Songs that shall bid the feet of Sorrow flee.
E. V. Lucas

TO CHRISTINE

CHILD of the silk-soft golden hair,
The sweet grave face, the hazel eyes,
Mother of dolls, a constant care
That makes you prematurely wise;

(Although your brother, younger yet, Adopts an independent tone, And begs you will not always set Your wisdom up against his own)—

I take delight to touch with you
On divers themes, and well I may;
It is your charming habit to
Believe exactly what I say.

When you inquire with thoughtful brow What any given object is,
Why it was made, and when, and how,
And other cognate mysteries;

When by your manner you imply
That nothing known to mortal men,
Or even angels up the sky,
Eludes my penetrating ken;

Forgotten hopes renew their bloom;
I feel I have not wholly failed;
"There still is one," I say, "from whom
My awful ignorance is veiled.

"As yet no disillusion saps
A faith pathetically stout;
And several seasons must elapse
Before she gets to find me out."

So from our converse I abstract
A sentiment akin to joy,
Fleeting, I own, and, as a fact,
Not unencumbered with alloy.

For memory probes an ancient sore Connected with my distant youth; I, too, should like to be once more A quiet searcher after truth;

Once more to learn in various schools
The things rejected by-and-by,
When I discovered certain rules
Which the exceptions stultify:

Found Nature with herself at strife (To take a single case) and woke To the depressing view that life Must be regarded as a joke.

A blight possessed my eager soul; My fancies took a fatal twist; And I assumed the chronic role Of what is called a humorist.

For you such fears are far away;
Your faith and your digestion thrive;
But then I'm forty, if a day,
And you, of course, are only five.

Still, here's the best I can in rhyme;
And when (how rare the angels' calls!)
You come again at Christmas-time
To greet the dear familiar walls,

You'll take my verse for what's its worth, And, though you find it barely sane, You'll raise a decent show of mirth To spare the author needless pain;

And lift your tiny silver mug,
Graven with mine, the giver's, name,
And toast my health, and bid me hug
The patient hope of coming fame;

And I shall answer, "Dear, you see,
My future lies behind my back;
But here's your immortality
In Mr. Punch's Almanack!"

OWEN SEAMAN

TO CHRISTINE

MY dear, when you were half your age, (2's into 10?) a good while back, I wrote about you on a page Of Mr. Punch's Almanack.

How you are gaining on me quick!

Your years were then $\frac{1}{8}$ of mine,
But Time, who does arithmetic,
Has made the ratio 2 to 9!

And now that o'er your shining head This second lustre (if you know What lustres are) has been and fled Into the Land of Longago—

And since you somehow failed to get
Those earlier verses off by heart,
I'll make you up another set.
So that's the Preface. Here we start!

Dear, as I see you nice and small,
Agile of leg and sound of lung,
And rather wistfully recall
What it was like to feel so young,

When grown-ups seemed, in taste and size, Removed from me immensely far— I often ask with vague surmise How old you think we really are.

Sometimes I fancy you behave
As if you found us past repair—
One foot already in the grave,
The other very nearly there!

Then you are wrong, and you must try
To take a more enlightened view;
You're not so much more young than I,
Nor I so much more old than you.

For, though you have the supple joints
That go so well with childhood's mirth,
In certain elemental points
You are the age of Mother Earth.

And while it's true I've ceased to hop
Out of my bed at peep of dawn,
Have lost the weasel's power to pop,
Nor can outrun the light-foot fawn,

Yet otherwise I'm far from old;
The words I use, so long and queer,
My manner, stern, abrupt and cold—
All this is just pretence, my dear.

As when you act your nursery plays, And ape your elders' talk and looks, So I have copied grown-up ways Either from life or else from books.

But in my heart, its hopes and fears, Its need of love, its faith in men, I yet may be, for all my years, As young as little girls of ten.

Owen Seaman

LITTLE APRIL

ITTLE April, in between
Blushing bride and tomboy,
Half a hoyden, half a queen,
Who's to win the day?
Tears for leaving lusty March,
Finger-tips for May then,
Little April in between,
Must she really say?

Little April, in between,
April undecided,
Half she is for folded hands,
Half for hands at play,
Half to run with rumpled hair,
Half for tresses braided.
Little April, in between,
Must she really say?

Little April, down the days
Pages stand to greet you,
Maidens with a starry veil
Wait beside the way,
Little April, in between,
April, and you choose not,
Father Time must take your hand—
Someone's got to say!

H. H. BASHFORD

CHILDREN OF TOIL (LONDON ORPHAN ASYLUM)

REAKING from the lap of the lowland pasture,
Sudden as a foam-crest single on a sea:
Dreamy in the rich noon, the old grey school-house
Palisades the heavens with spires slim and free.
Creeper-clad, the walls breathe rippling crimson,
Fiery as Youth all athirst for its day. . . .
Ah, that the day might be such an one that sunset
Comes neither feared nor reproached for delay!

Fleeing from the school-room's velvet coolness,
Light, lulling croons to the hill's head are spun;
Upward to the teacher demure little pupils
Turn timid faces, as buds to April sun.
Cheerily they pass through the merry lanes and meadows,
Sombre are their dresses, their faces are as bright.

Dreamy, gleamy springtime is in their eyes, but shadows Hover in their going to strangle their delight.

When to the moon she unfolds her gardens, Starred through and through with the pale passion flower;

Then on the night hangs the life-breath of childhood. . . . Move with the spent leaf; it is her little hour.

Soon shall her sweetness be yielded to the moonlight— Ay, the melting moonlight soon alone shall know Hopes and fears and fancies, for swallow-swift the years fly;

Early toil is theirs, poor joy and petty woe!

THOMAS BURKE

"GROWN TIRED OF PLAY"



"GROWN TIRED OF PLAY"

A LOST CHILD

COULD you have seen the violets That blossomed in her eyes: Could you have kissed that golden hair And drunk those holy sighs, You would have been her tiring-maid As joyfully as I,— Content to deek your little queen, And let the world go by.

Could you have seen those violets Hide in their graves of snow; Drawn all that gold along your hand While she lay smiling so ;-O, you would tread this weary earth As heavily as I!-Content to clasp her little grave And let the world go by.

Anon.

EAR LORD, receive my son, whose winning love To me was like a friendship, far above The course of nature, or his tender age, Whose looks could all my bitter griefs assuage. Let his pure soul, ordained seven years to be, " In that frail body, which was part of me, Remain my pledge in heaven, as sent to show How to this port at every step I go. IOHN BEAUMONT



LUCY

THREE years she grew in sun and shower Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower On earth was never sown:
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be Both law and impulse: and with me The girl, in rock and plain, In earth and heaven, in glade and bower Shall feel an overseeing power To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn That wild with glee across the lawn Or up the mountain springs; And hers shall be the breathing balm, And hers the silence and the calm Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend To her; for her the willow bend; Nor shall she fail to see E'en in the motions of the storm Grace that shall mould the maiden's form By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear To her; and she shall lean her ear In many a secret place Where rivulets dance their wayward round, And beauty born of murmuring sound Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell:
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—How soon my Lucy's race was run! She died and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LUCY GRAY; OR, SOLITUDE

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew; She dwelt on a wild moor, —The sweetest thing that ever grew Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play, The hare upon the green; But the sweet face of Lucy Gray Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—You to the town must go; And take a lantern, child, to light Your mother through the snow."

"GROWN TIRED OF PLAY"

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
"Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster clock has just struck two
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the Father raised his hook, And snapped a faggot band, He plied his work;—and Lucy took The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe: With many a wanton stroke Her feet disperse the powdery snow, That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time: She wandered up and down; And many a hill did Lucy climb: But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night Went shouting far and wide; But there was neither sound nor sight To serve them for a guide.

At daybreak on a hill they stood That overlooked the moor; And thence they saw the bridge of wood, A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried, "In heaven we all shall meet;"
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge They tracked the footmarks small; And through the broken hawthorn hedge, And by the long stone wall;

And then an open field they crossed: The marks were still the same; They tracked them on, nor ever lost; And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank Those footmarks one by one, Into the middle of the plank, And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day She is a living child; That we may see sweet Lucy Gray Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along, And never looks behind; And sings a solitary song That whistles in the wind.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

O SLEEP, MY BABE

O SLEEP, my babe; hear not the rippling wave,
Nor feel the breeze that round thee ling'ring
strays
To drink thy balmy breath,
And sigh one long farewell.

Soon shall it mourn above thy wat'ry bed, And whisper to me on the wave-beat shore, Deep murm'ring in reproach. Thy sad untimely fate.

Ere those dear eyes had open'd on the light, In vain to plead, thy coming life was sold, O waken'd but to sleep. Whence it can wake no more!

A thousand and a thousand silken leaves The tufted beech unfolds in early spring, All clad in tenderest green, All of the self-same shape;

A thousand infant faces, soft and sweet, Each year sends forth, yet every mother views Her last not least beloved. Like its dear self alone.

No musing mind hath ever yet foreshaped The face to-morrow's sun shall first reveal, No heart hath e'er conceived What love that face will bring.

O sleep, my babe, nor heed how mourns the gale To part with thy soft locks and fragrant breath, As when it deeply sighs O'er Autumn's latest bloom.

SARA COLERIDGE

THRENODY

HE south wind brings Life, sunshine, and desire, And on every mount and meadow Breathes aromatic fire; But over the dead he has no power, The lost, the lost, he cannot restore; And, looking over the hills, I mourn The darling who shall not return.

I see my empty house,
I see my trees repair their boughs;
And he, the wondrous child,
Whose silver warble wild
Outvalued every pulsing sound
Within the air's cerulean round—
The hyacinthine boy, for whom
Morn well might break and April bloom—
The gracious boy, who did adorn
The world whereinto he was born,
And by his countenance repay
The favour of the loving Day—
Has disappeared from the Day's eye;
Far and wide she cannot find him;
My hopes pursue, they cannot bind him.

Returned this day, the south-wind searches, And finds young pines and budding birches; But finds not the budding man; Nature who lost, cannot remake him; Fate let him fall, Fate cannot retake him; Nature, Fate, men, him seek in vain.

And whither now, my truant wise and sweet O, whither tend thy feet? I had the right, few days ago,
Thy steps to watch, thy place to know;
How have I forfeited the right?
Hast thou forgot me in a new delight?
I hearken for thy household cheer.
O eloquent child!
Whose voice, an equal messenger,
Conveyed thy meaning mild.
What though the pains and joys
Whereof it spoke were toys

"Grown Tired of Play"

Fitting his age and ken,
Yet fairest dames and bearded men,
Who heard the sweet request,
So gentle, wise, and grave,
Bended with joy to his behest,
And let the world's affairs go by,
A while to share his cordial game,
Or mend his wicker waggon-frame,
Still plotting how their hungry ear
That winsome voice again might hear;
For his lips could well pronounce
Words that were persuasions.

Gentlest guardians marked serene His early hope, his liberal mien; Took counsel from his guiding eyes To make this wisdom earthly wise. Ah, vainly do these eyes recall The school-march, each day's festival, When every morn my bosom glowed To watch the convoy on the road; The babe in willow waggon closed, With rolling eyes and face composed; With children forward and behind. Like Cupids studiously inclined; And he the chieftain paced beside, The centre of the troop allied, With sunny face of sweet repose, To guard the babe from fancied foes. The little captain innocent Took the eye with him as he went; Each village senior paused to scan And speak the lovely caravan. From the window I look out To mark thy beautiful parade, Stately marching in cap and coat

To some tune by fairies played— A music heard by thee alone To works as noble led thee on. Now Love and Pride, alas! in vain, Up and down their glances strain. The painted sled stands where it stood, The kennel by the corded wood; He gathered sticks to staunch the wall Of the snow-tower, when snow should fall; The ominous hole he dug in the sand, And childhood's castles built or planned; His daily haunts I well discern— The poultry-yard, the shed, the barn-And every inch of garden ground Paced by the blessed feet around, From the roadside to the brook Whereinto he loved to look. Step the meek birds where erst they ranged; The wintry garden lies unchanged; The brook into the stream runs on; But the deep-eyed boy is gone.

On that shaded day,
Dark with more clouds than tempests are,
When thou didst yield thy innocent breath
In bird-like heavings unto death,
Night came, and Nature had not thee;
I said, "We are mates in misery."
The morrow dawned with needless glow:
Each snowbird chirped, each fowl must crow;
Each tramper started, but the feet
Of the most beautiful and sweet
Of human youth had left the hill
And garden—they were bound and still.
There's not a sparrow or a wren,
There's not a blade of autumn grain,

Which the four seasons do not tend, And tides of life and increase end; And every chick of every bird, And weed and rock-moss is preferred.

O ostrich-like forgetfulness: O loss of larger in the less! Was there no star that could be sent. No watcher in the firmament. No angel from the countless host That loiters round the crystal coast, Could stoop to heal that only child, Nature's sweet marvel undefiled. And keep the blossom of the earth. Which all her harvests were not worth? Not mine—I never called thee mine. But Nature's heir—if I repine, And seeing rashly torn and moved Not what I made, but what I loved, Grow early old with grief that thou Must to the wastes of Nature go— 'Tis because a general hope Was quenched, and all must doubt and grope.

For flattering planets seemed to say
This child should ills of ages stay,
By wondrous tongue, and guided pen,
Bring the flown Muses back to men.
Perchance not he but Nature ailed;
The world, and not the infant failed.
It was not ripe yet to sustain
A genius of so fine a strain,
Who gazed upon the sun and moon
As if he came into his own,
And, pregnant with his grander thought,
Brought the old order into doubt.

His beauty once their beauty tried; They could not feed him, and he died, And wandered backward as in scorn, To wait an æon to be born. Ill day which made this beauty waste. Plight broken, this high face defaced! Some went and came about the dead: And some in books of solace read: Some to their friends the tidings say; Some went to write, some went to pray; One tarried here, there hurried one; But their heart abode with none. Covetous death bereaved us all, To aggrandise one funeral. The eager fate which carried thee Took the largest part of me; For this losing is true dying; This is lordly man's down-lying, This is slow but sure reclining, Star by star his world resigning. O child of paradise! Boy who made dear his father's home, In whose deep eyes Men read the welfare of the times to come, I am too much bereft. The world dishonoured thou hast left. O truth's and Nature's costly lie! O trusted broken prophecy! O richest fortune sourly crossed! Born for the future, to the future lost!

The deep Heart answered, "Weepest thou? Worthier cause for passion wild If I had not taken the child. And deemest thou as those who pore, With aged eyes, short way before—

Think'st Beauty vanished from the coast Of Matter, and thy darling lost! Taught he not thee—the Man of eld, Whose eyes within his eyes beheld Heaven's numerous hierarchy span The mystic gulf from God to man? To be alone wilt thou begin When worlds of lovers hem thee in? To-morrow when the masks shall fall That dizen Nature's carnival, The pure shall see by their own will, Which overflowing Love shall fill, 'Tis not within the force of fate The fate-conjoined to separate. But thou, my votary, weepest thou? I gave thee sight—where is it now? I taught thy heart beyond the reach Of ritual, bible, or of speech: Wrote in thy mind's transparent table, As far as the communicable: Taught thee each private sign to raise, Lit by the supersolar blaze. Past utterance, and past belief, And past the blasphemy of grief, The mysteries of Nature's art; And though no Muse can these impart, Throb thine with Nature's throbbing breast, And all is clear from east to west.

"I came to thee as to a friend;
Dearest, to thee I did not send
Tutors, but a joyful eye,
Innocence that matched the sky,
Lovely locks, a form of wonder,
Laughter rich as woodland thunder,
That thou might'st entertain apart

The richest flowering of all art: And, as the great all-loving Day Through smallest chambers takes its way, That thou might'st break thy daily bread With prophet, Saviour, and head; That thou might'st cherish for thine own The riches of sweet Mary's Son, Boy-Rabbi, Israel's paragon. And thoughtest thou such guest Would in thy hall take up his rest? Would rushing life forget her laws, Fate's glowing revolution pause? High omens ask diviner guess : Not to be conned to tediousness. And know my higher gifts unbind The zone that girds the incarnate mind. When the scanty shores are full With Thoughts perilous, whirling pool: When frail Nature can no more, Then the Spirit strikes the hour: My servant Death, with solving rite, Pours finite into infinite.

"Wilt thou freeze love's tidal flow,
Whose streams through Nature circling go?
Nail the wild star to its track
On the half-climbed zodiac?
Light is light which radiates,
Blood is blood which circulates,
Life is life which generates,
And many-seeming life is one—
Wilt thou transfix and make it none?
Its onward force too starkly pent
In figure, bone, and lineament?
Wilt thou, uncalled, interrogate,
Talker! the unreplying Fate?

Nor see the genius of the whole Ascendant in the private soul, Beckon it when to go and come, Self announced its hour of doom? Fair the soul's recess and shrine. Magic-built to last a season; Masterpiece of love benign; Fairer that expansive reason, Whose omen 'tis and sign. Wilt thou not ope thy heart to know What rainbows teach, and sunsets show? Verdict which accumulates From lengthening scroll of human fates, Voice of earth to earth returned, Prayers of saints that inly burned— Saying, What is excellent, As God lives, is permanent; Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain; Heart's love will meet thee again. Revere the Maker; fetch thine eye Up to His style, and manners of the sky Not of adamant and gold Built He heaven stark and cold; No, but a nest of bending reeds, Flowering grass, and scented weeds; Or like a traveller's fleeing tent, Or bow above the tempest bent; Built of tears and sacred flames. And virtue reaching to its aims; Built of furtherance and pursuing, Not of spent deeds, but of doing. Silent rushes the swift Lord Through ruined systems still restored, Broad-sowing, bleak and void to bless, Plants with worlds the wilderness; Waters with tears of ancient sorrow

Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.

House and tenant go to ground,

Lost in God, in Godhead found."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

RESIGNATION

THERE is no flock, however watched and tended, But one dead lamb is there! There is no fireside, howso'er defended, But has one vacant chair!

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted!

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions Not from the ground arise, But oftentimes celestial benedictions Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapours; Amid these earthly damps What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no Death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.

She is not dead, the child of our affection,
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

"Grown Tired of Play"

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion, By guardian angels led, Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution, She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing In those bright realms of air; Year after year, her tender steps pursuing, Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her; For when with raptures wild In our embraces we again enfold her, She will not be a child;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion, Clothed with celestial grace; And beautiful with all the soul's expansion Shall we behold her face.

And though at times impetuous with emotion
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the ocean,
That cannot be at rest,—

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way.
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

THE OPEN WINDOW

THE old house by the lindens Stood silent in the shade, And on the gravelled pathway The light and shadow played.

I saw the nursery windows
Wide open to the air;
But the faces of the children,
They were no longer there.

The large Newfoundland house-dog Was standing by the door; He looked for his little playmates, Who would return no more.

They walked not under the lindens, They played not in the hall; But shadow, and silence, and sadness Were hanging over all.

The birds sang in the branches,
With sweet familiar tone;
But the voices of the children
Will be heard in dreams alone!

And the boy that walked beside me,
He could not understand
Why close in mine, ah! closer
I pressed his warm, soft hand.
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

"Grown Tired of Play"

VESTA

Our own have reconciled,
Most quietly, most tenderly,
Take home Thy star-named child!

Thy grace is in her patient eyes,
Thy words are on her tongue;
The very silence round her seems
As if the angels sung.

Her smile is as a listening child's
Who hears its mother call;
The lilies of Thy perfect peace
About her pillow fall.

She leans from out our clinging arms
To rest herself in Thine;
Alone to Thee, dear Lord, can we
Our well-beloved resign!

O, less for her than for ourselves
We bow our heads and pray;
Her setting star, like Bethlehem's,
To Thee shall point the way!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

THE CHANGELING

I HAD a little daughter,
And she was given to me
To lead me gently backward
To the Heavenly Father's knee,

That I, by the force of nature, Might in some dim wise divine The depth of His infinite patience To this wayward soul of mine.

I know not how others saw her,
But to me she was wholly fair,
And the light of the heaven she came from
Still lingered and gleamed in her hair;
For it was as wavy and golden,
And as many changes took
As the shadows of sun-gilt ripples
On the yellow bed of a brook.

To what can I liken her smiling
Upon me, her kneeling lover,
How it leaped from her lips to her eyelids,
And dimpled her wholly over,
Till her outstretched hands smiled also,
And I almost seemed to see
The very heart of her mother
Sending sun through her veins to me!

She had been with us scarce a twelvemonth And it hardly seemed a day,
When a troop of wandering angels
Stole my little daughter away;
Or perhaps those heavenly Zingari
But loosed the hampering strings,
And when they had opened her cage-door,
My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling, A little angel child, That seems like her bud in full blossom And smiles as she never smiled:

When I wake in the morning, I see it Where she always used to lie, And I feel as weak as a violet Alone 'neath the awful sky;

As weak, yet as trustful also;
For the whole year long I see
All the wonders of faithful Nature
Still worked for the love of me;
Winds wander, and dews drip earthward,
Rain falls, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper
A poor little violet.

This child is not mine as the first was,
I cannot sing it to rest,
I cannot lift it up fatherly
And bless it upon my breast;
Yet it lies in my little one's cradle
And sits in my little one's chair
And the light of the heaven she's gone to
Transfigures its golden hair.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

WITHIN A MILE

WITHIN a mile of Edinburgh town We laid our little darling down; Our first seed in God's acre sown!

So sweet a place! Death looks beguiled Of half his gloom; or sure he smiled To win our lovely spirit child.

God giveth his beloved sleep So calm, within its silence deep, As angel-guards its watch did keep.

The City looketh solemn and sweet; It bares a gentle brow, to greet The mourners mourning at its feet.

The sea of human life breaks round This shore o' the dead, with softened sound: Wild flowers climb each mossy mound

To place in resting hands their palm, And breathe their beauty, bloom and balm; Folding the dead in fragrant calm.

A softer shadow Grief might wear; And old Heartache come gather there The peace that falleth after prayer.

Poor heart that danced along the vines All reeling-ripe with wild love-wines, Thou walk'st with Death among the pines!

Lorn Mother, at the dark grave-door, She kneeleth, pleading o'er and o'er; But it is shut for evermore.

She toileth on, the mournfull'st thing, At the vain task of emptying The cistern whence the salt tears spring.

The spirit of life may leap above, But in that grave her prisoned dove Lies, cold to the warm embrace of love,

And dark, tho' all the world be bright, And lonely, with a City in sight; And desolate in the rainy night.

And so we laid our darling down, When summer's cheek grew ripely brown, And still, tho' grief hath milder grown,

Unto the Stranger's land we cleave, Like some poor birds that grieve and grieve, Round the robbed nest, and cannot leave.

GERALD MASSEY

OUR WEE WHITE ROSE

A LL in our marriage garden
Grew, smiling up to God,
A bonnier flower than ever
Suckt the green warmth of the sod.
O beautiful unfathomably
Its little life unfurled;
Life's crowning sweetness was our wee
White Rose of all the world.

From out a gracious bosom,
Our bud of beauty grew;
It fed on smiles for sunshine,
And tears for daintier dew.
Aye nestling warm and tenderly,
Our leaves of love were curled
So close and close about our wee
White Rose of all the world.

Two flowers of glorious crimson
Grew with our Rose of Light;
Still kept the sweet heaven-grafted slip
Her whiteness saintly white.
In the winds of life they danced with glee,
And reddened as it whirled;
White, white and wondrous grew our wee
White Rose of all the world.

209

With mystical faint fragrance
Our house of life she filled—
Revealed each hour some fairy tower,
Where winged hope might build.
We saw—though none like us might see—
Such precious promise pearled
Upon the petals of our wee
White Rose of all the world.

But evermore the halo
Of angel-light increased;
Like the mystery of moonlight,
That folds some fairy feast.
Snow-white, snow-soft, snow-silently,
Our darling bud up-curled,
And dropt in the Grave-God's lap—our wee
White Rose of all the world.

Our Rose was but in blossom;
Our life was but in spring;
When down the solemn midnight
We heard the spirits sing:
"Another bud of infancy,
With holy dews impearled;"
And in their hands they bore our wee
White Rose of all the world.

You scarce would think so small a thing
Could leave a loss so large;
Her little light such shadow fling,
From dawn to sunset's marge.
In other springs our life may be
In bannered bloom unfurled;
But never, never match our wee
White Rose of all the world.

GERALD MASSEY

BABY BELL

I

TAVE you not heard the poets tell How came the dainty Baby Bell Into this world of woe? The gates of Heaven were left ajar: With folded hands and dreamy eyes, Wandering out of Paradise. She saw this planet like a star. Hung in the depth of even-Its bridges, running to and fro, O'er which the white-winged Angels go, Bearing the holy Dead to Heaven! She touched a bridge of flowers—her feet, So light they did not bend the bells Of the celestial asphodels! They fell like dew upon the flowers, And all the air grew strangely sweet! And thus came dainty Baby Bell Into this world of ours.

TT

She came and brought delicious May.

The swallows built beneath the eaves;
Like sunlight in and out the leaves,
The robin went, the livelong day;
The lily swung its noiseless bell,
And o'er the porch the trembling vine
Seemed bursting with its veins of wine.
How sweetly, softly twilight fell!
O, earth was full of singing birds,
And happy spring-tide flowers,
When the dainty Baby Bell
Came to this world of ours.

H

O Baby, dainty Baby Bell, How fair she grew from day to day! What woman-nature filled her eyes. What poetry within them lay! Those deep and tender twilight eyes, So full of meaning, pure and bright, As if she yet stood in the light Of those oped gates of Paradise! And we loved Baby more and more: Ah, never in our hearts before Was love so lovely born: We felt we had a link between This real world and that unseen-The land beyond the morn! And for love of those dear eyes, For love of her whom God led forth (The mother's being ceased on earth When Baby came from Paradise), For love of Him who smote our lives, And woke the chords of joy and pain, We said, "Sweet Christ!"—our hearts bent down Like violets after rain.

IV

And now the orchards, which in June
Were white and rosy in their bloom—
Filling the crystal veins of air
With gentle pulses of perfume—
Were rich in Autumn's mellow prime:
The plums were globes of honeyed wine,
The hived sweets of summer time!
The ivory chestnut burst its shell:
The soft-cheeked peaches blushed and fell!

The grapes were purpling in the grange, And time brought just as rich a change In little Baby Bell.

Her tiny form more perfect grew,
And in her features we could trace,
In softened curves, her mother's face!
Her angel-nature ripened too.
We thought her lovely when she came,
But she was holy saintly now

But she was holy, saintly now . . . Around her pale angelic brow
We saw a slender ring of flame!

V

God's hand had taken away the seal Which held the portals of her speech; And oft she said a few strange words Whose meaning lay beyond our reach. She never was a child to us, We never held her being's key:

We could not teach her holy things; She was Christ's self in purity!

VΙ

It came upon us by degrees:
We saw its shadow ere it fell,
The knowledge that our God had sent
His messenger for Baby Bell.
We shuddered with unlanguaged pain,
And all our hopes were changed to fears,
And all our thoughts ran into tears
Like sunshine into rain.

We cried aloud in our behalf,
"O, smite us gently, gently God!
Teach us to bend and kiss the rod,
And perfect grow through grief!"

Ah, how we loved her, God can tell; Her little heart was cased in ours: Our hearts are broken, Baby Bell!

VII

At last he came, the messenger,

The messenger from unseen lands;
And what did dainty Baby Bell?
She only crossed her little hands,
She only looked more meek and fair!
We parted back her silken hair;
We laid some buds upon her brow,
White buds like summer's drifted snow—
Death's bride arrayed in flowers!
And thus went dainty Baby Bell,
Out of this world of ours!

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

I HOMAS DAILEY ALDRICH

PRELUDE TO "THE FOREST OF WILD THYME"

HUSH! if you remember how we sailed to old Japan,
Peterkin was with us then, our little brother
Peterkin!

Now we've lost him, so they say: I think the tall thin man

Must have come and touched him with his curious twinkling fan

And taken him away again, our merry little Peterkin; He'll be frightened all alone; we'll find him if we can;

Come and look for Peterkin, poor little Peterkin.

214

No one would believe us if we told them what we know, Or they wouldn't grieve for Peterkin, merry little Peterkin:

If they'd only watched us roaming through the streets of

Miyako,

And travelling in a palanquin where parents never go,

And seen the golden gardens where we wandered once with Peterkin.

And smelt the purple orchards where the cherry-blossoms

blow.

They wouldn't mourn for Peterkin, merry little Peterkin.

Put away your muskets, lay aside the drum,

Hang it by the wooden sword we made for little Peterkin !

He was once our trumpeter, now his bugle's dumb,

Pile your arms beneath it, for the owlet light is come, We'll wander through the roses where we marched of old with Peterkin.

We'll search the summer sunset where the Hybla beehives hum,

And—if we meet a fairy there—we'll ask for news of Peterkin.

He was once our cabin-boy and cooked the sweets for tea; And O, we've sailed round the world with laughing little Peterkin;

From nursery floor to pantry door we've roamed the

mighty sea, And come to port below the stairs in distant Caribee, But wheresoe'er we sailed we took our little lubber

Peterkin.

Because his wide grey eyes believed much more than ours could see,

And so we liked our Peterkin, our trusty little Peterkin.

Peterkin, Peterkin, I think if you came back The captain of our host to-day should be the bugler Peterkin.

And he should lead our smugglers up that steep and narrow track.

A band of noble brigands, bearing each a mighty pack Crammed with lace and jewels to the secret cave of Peterkin.

And he should wear the biggest boots and make his pistol crack,—

The Spanish cloak, the velvet mask, we'd give them all to Peterkin

Come, my brother pirates, I am tired of play: Come and look for Peterkin, little brother Peterkin, Our merry little comrade that the fairies took away, For people think we've lost him, and when we come to say

Our good-night prayers to mother, if we pray for little Peterkin

Her eyes are very sorrowful, she turns her head away Come and look for Peterkin, merry little Peterkin.

God bless little Peterkin, wherever he may be ! Come and look for Peterkin, lonely little Peterkin: I wonder if they've taken him again across the sea From the town of Wonder-Wander and the Amfalula tree

To the lands of many marvels where we roamed of old with Peterkin,

The land of blue pagodas and the flowery fields of tea! Come and look for Peterkin, poor little Peterkin. ALFRED NOYES

"Grown Tired of Play"

THE SPLENDID SECRET (FROM THE FOREST OF WILD THYME")

With mother on that narrow walk
Between the laurels (where we play
At Red-skins lurking for their prey)
And the grey old wall of roses
Where the Persian kitten dozes
And the sunlight sleeps upon
Crannies of the crumbling stone
—So hot it is you scarce can bear
Your naked hand upon it there,
Though there luxuriating in heat
With a slow and gorgeous beat
White-winged currant-moths display
Their spots of black and gold all day.—

Well, since we greatly wished to know Whether we too might some day go Where little Peterkin had gone Without one word and all alone, We crept up through the laurels there Hoping that we might overhear The splendid secret, darkly great, Of Peterkin's mysterious fate; And on what high adventure bound He left our pleasant garden-ground, Whether for old Japan once more He voyaged from the dim blue shore, Or whether he set out to run By candle-light to Babylon.

We just missed something father said About a young prince that was dead,

A little warrior that had fought And failed: how hopes were brought to nought He said, and mortals made to bow Before the Juggernaut of Death, And all the world was darker now. For Time's grey lips and icy breath Had blown out all the enchanted lights That burned in Love's Arabian nights; And now he could not understand Mother's mystic fairy-land, "Land of the dead, poor fairy-tale," He murmured, and her face grew pale, And then with great soft shining eyes She leant to him—she looked so wise— And, with her cheek against his cheek, We heard her, ah so softly, speak.

"Husband, there was a happy day,
Long ago, in love's young May,
When with a wild flower in your hand
You echoed that dead poet's cry—
'Little flower, but if I could understand!'
And you saw it had roots in the depths of the sky,
And there in that smallest bud lay furled
The secret and meaning of all the world."

He shook his head and then he tried To kiss her, but she only cried And turned her face away and said, "You come between me and my dead! His soul is near me, night and day, But you would drive it far away; And you shall never kiss me now Until you lift that brave old brow Of faith I know so well; or else Refute the tale the skylark tells,

"Grown Tired of Play"

Tarnish the glory of that May, Explain the Smallest Flower away." And still he said, "Poor fairy-tales, How terribly their starlight pales Before the solemn sun of truth That rises o'er the grave of youth!"

"Is heaven a fairy-tale?" she said,— And once again he shook his head: And yet we ne'er could understand Why heaven should not be fairy-land, A part of heaven at least, and why The thought of it made mother cry, And why they went away so sad, And father still quite unforgiven. For what could children be but glad

To find a fairy-land in heaven?

And as we talked it o'er we found Our brains were really spinning round; But Dick, our eldest, late returned From school, by all the lore he'd learned Declared that we should seek the lost Smallest Flower at any cost. For, since within its leaves lay furled The secret of the whole wide world, He thought that we might learn therein The whereabouts of Peterkin: And, if we found the Flower, we knew Father would be forgiven, too; And mother's kiss atone for all The quarrel by the rose-hung wall; We knew not how, we knew not why, But Dick it was who bade us try, Dick made it all seem plain and clear, And Dick it is who helps us here

To tell this tale of fairy-land
In words we scarce can understand.
For ere another golden hour
Had passed, our anxious parents found
We'd left the scented garden-ground
To seek—the Smallest Flower.

ALFRED Noves

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